FAA Safety BRIEFING

July/August 2012

Your source for general aviation news and information

Making Flying FUN!

Federal Aviation Administration

www.faa.gov/news/safety_briefing/

The July/August 2012 issue of FAA Safety Briefing *explores the fun side of personal flying. Articles focus on many of the interesting activities and opportunities pilots have to keep the spirit of fun and adventure in aviation alive and well.*

Cover: Cessna Photo

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JOHN ALLEN
DIRECTOR, FLIGHT STANDARDS SERVICE

Adventure, Commerce, and Service

We live in a complex world, and there's not much we can do to change that reality. But when it comes to such basic things as our mission statement, short, sweet, and simple is the only way to go. That's why I pushed for adoption of a new Flight Standards Service mission statement, one that explains the *what*, the *why*, and the *who* of what we do in a way that everyone can easily remember. Our mission is:

To assure the safety, while enabling the adventure, commerce and service of aviation.

For me, and I hope for you, this simple statement captures the essence and the heart of what the FAA Flight Standards Service is charged to do. But let me take a moment to talk about the individual elements.

Adventure: Aviation is very much about adventure, and about having fun – the focus of this issue of *FAA Safety Briefing* magazine. Much of what the FAA does is necessarily associated with commercial aviation, so I put "adventure" right at the beginning of the mission statement. I want to be sure we remember that enabling the fun, adventure, and passion of personal flying is also an important part of the FAA's aviation safety mission.

Commerce: The FAA's mission with respect to commercial aviation is better known, and understandably so. Civil aviation contributes $1.3 trillion to our economy and generates more than 10 million jobs in the United States alone. Millions of people travel by air each day, and the work we do contributes to making our aviation system the envy of the world.

Service: Aviation serves not only our nation's economy, but also the American spirit of service and volunteerism. Our safety work enables and facilitates the kind of service performed through programs like EAA's Young Eagles, Grace Flight, Pilots 'n Paws, and numerous others.

Safety: Assuring safety might seem to be the most obvious component of our mission statement, but I want to spend a little more time explaining the nuances of our safety role.

The Flight Standards Service has three main safety functions: setting the certification standards for airmen and operators; issuing certification based on those standards; and conducting oversight and surveillance of certificate holders to assure continued operational safety.

Though the FAA clearly has a significant role in assuring continued operational safety, *everyone* bears that responsibility. The FAA cannot "inspect safety into the system." It is the duty of each individual and each organization that we certificate to operate in accordance with the established standards. The agency's role is to verify that certificate holders continue to meet standards.

The FAA has a wide range of tools to perform the functions associated with continued operational safety. Because enforcement is the most obvious tool, it is often the first to be used. My message to the FAA's inspector workforce, though, is that enforcement may not be the most effective means of achieving compliance and, more importantly, it may not be the best way to achieve our goal of promoting safety. In fact, I believe that an enforcement-only approach is counterproductive. It obscures the goal of achieving safety compliance. It misses opportunities to educate. It undermines efforts to develop a strong safety culture. It wastes FAA and industry resources. And it dilutes our ability to focus on real risk.

My staff is working on updated guidance for our inspectors that outlines a more thoughtful approach. The key question is what best serves our safety promotion goal. Enforcement should be reserved for events and incidents where intentional disregard, flagrant safety violations, dangerous complacency, or outright stupidity pose a systemic threat to continued operational safety in aviation. For an unintentional infraction, I want inspectors to first seek resolution via positive, corrective action that most likely would include additional education and skills training.

Thank you for the passion you have for aviation safety, and for helping to keep the adventure, commerce, and service of aviation alive and well.

Educational Opportunities Abound at AirVenture®

The 2012 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh runs from July 23 to July 29 and is expected to attract more than 540,000 visitors from all corners of the globe. In addition to the more than 800 exhibitors and the extensive list of top-notch air show performers, AirVenture also presents some unique educational opportunities for airmen. Among those are the dozens of safety seminars held at the FAA Aviation Safety Center. (Check page 5 for a list of topics and times, or go to www.faasafety.gov.)

Six seminars will be held each day between 0830 and 1645, all of which qualify for WINGS credit. Some of this year's presenters include aviation author and humorist Rod Machado, Aircraft Electronics Association Vice President Richard Peri, and FAA Federal Air Surgeon Dr. Fred Tilton. And on Sunday, July 29, the FAA Safety Center will be showing aviation safety videos all day long, so stop by, cool off, and catch a movie or two. The schedule is subject to change, so please check http://qrs.ly/np1sty0 for updates.

For those planning to fly in to Wittman Regional Airport (KOSH) or one of the surrounding areas, you'll need to review the AirVenture NOTAM available for download at www.airventure.org/news/2012/120503_notam.html. The NOTAM, which is in effect from 0600 Friday, July 20, through noon on Monday, July 30, outlines procedures for the many types of aircraft that fly to Oshkosh for the event, as well as aircraft that land and depart at nearby airports. It was designed by FAA in partnership with EAA to assist pilots in their flight planning and is required reading if you're flying your aircraft to AirVenture. Some of the changes for this year include revised IFR arrival and departure routings, revised VFR arrival procedures, and updated airport information and telephone numbers.

Those attending AirVenture will also have a chance to recognize this year's GA Award winners at a special ceremony in the "Theater in the Woods" pavilion. Check www.airventure.org for date and time information. For more on the award winners, see page 28.

Photo by James Williams

NTSB Releases 2011 GA Safety Stats

According to statistics released by the National Transportation Board in April, the number of general aviation accidents is up slightly, but the accident rate and the number of fatal accidents has decreased in the past year. The report indicates that GA accidents increased from 1,439 in 2010, to 1,466 in 2011. However, fatal accidents dropped from 268 to 263 and GA fatalities declined slightly from 454 in 2010, to 444 in 2011. The report also noted a drop in the accident rate due to increased flight hours. The accident rate per 100,000 flight hours decreased from 6.63 in 2010 to 6.51 in 2011. The 2011 statistical tables showing accidents, fatalities, and accident rates for major segments of U.S. civil aviation are available at: www.ntsb.gov/data/aviation_stats_2012.html.

FAA Issues GA Airport Study

Did you know that three out of four takeoffs and landings at U.S. airports are conducted by GA aircraft? And most of these flights occur at the nearly 3,000 GA airports nationwide. These airports support a diverse set of activities and have varying levels of planning and infrastructure needs. Yet, how they are categorized has not kept up.

To help accomplish this, the FAA took on a groundbreaking 18-month study designed to cap-

ture the many diverse functions of GA airports. The report, titled General Aviation Airports: A National Asset, aims to provide the general public with a better understanding of GA airports and the pivotal role they play in our society, economy, and the entire aviation system.

The study also aligns the GA airports into four categories—national, regional, local, and basic—based on their existing activity levels, such as the number and type of based aircraft, number of passenger boardings, and the type of flights.

- *National* airports give communities access to national and international markets.
- *Regional* airports connect communities to statewide and interstate markets.
- *Local* airports provide access to intrastate and interstate markets.
- *Basic* airports link communities with the national airport system and support general aviation activities.

The new categories better capture their diverse functions and the economic contributions GA airports make to their communities and the nation. This also helps the FAA, state aeronautical agencies, and airport sponsors make planning decisions.

Of the 2,952 GA airports studied, 2,455 were grouped into the new categories. The FAA plans to further study the remaining 497 airports and will begin working in the fall of 2012 with airport sponsors and state aeronautic divisions to identify the activities these airports support, and how they serve the public interest.

"While this report has given us a good foundation and starting point, we recognize that more work needs to be done," says FAA Associate Administrator for Airports Christa Fornarotto. "We pledge to continue working with our aviation stakeholders and local communities to ensure that our airports remain safe and efficient and meet the needs of the American public."

To view the report, go to: www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/ga_study/.

VFR Charts Made with Tear-Resistant Paper

Have you noticed a change with your newest VFR charts? Effective with the May 31 charting cycle, Aeronautical Aviation Products (AeroNav) began using a high quality, more durable paper for the entire suite of Visual Charting Products. At the request of pilots, products such as VFR Sectionals, Terminal Area Charts (TACs), World Area Charts (WACs), and Helicopter Charts will now be printed on this superior quality paper that is both tear- and water-resistant. The charts will be made available without any increase in price.

Have You Re-Registered Your Aircraft?

In order to improve the integrity of the aircraft registration database, the FAA published a rule in 2010 requiring all aircraft registered prior to Oct. 1, 2010 to be re-registered over a three-year period, and then renew on a regular basis thereafter. Based on the re-registration schedule adopted with the rule, online applications from owners of aircraft registered in September of any year are being accepted through July 31. These owners should have received a letter from the FAA with a code to be used when re-registering online. Owners who miss the deadline must register by mail using Form 8050-1a (https://amsrvs.registry.faa.gov/renewregistration/renewal_reject.aspx?blank=1).

The FAA is now mailing notices for aircraft registered in October of any year. Owners of these aircraft must re-register online between Aug. 1 and Oct. 31, 2012 to allow sufficient time to receive a new certificate. For more information on the re-registration process, go to www.faa.gov/licenses_certificates/aircraft_certification/aircraft_registry/reregistration/.

NextGen Performance Snapshots

NextGen is scoring big with its latest online resource. The FAA recently launched Web-based NextGen Performance Snapshots (Web-NPS), a reporting tool with scorecards highlighting the ongoing transformation of the U.S. airspace system.

The Web-NPS is designed to provide reports on the performance of NextGen capabilities as they become measurable throughout the entire country and national airspace. The goal is to be as transparent as possible and to show the results of NextGen in raw numbers. The Snapshots tool is designed to show progress in various geographic regions: the 21 metroplexes we have identified, the 30 Core airports, and targeted airspace, such as the Gulf of Mexico. The web tool will eventually integrate 11 key performance areas including access, the ability of aircraft to utilize wide area augmentation system (WAAS) approach procedures. The access metric is expected in September 2012.

For more information, go to http://www.faa.gov/nextgen/snapshots/.

You Can Take It With You:

Mobile Apps for Risk Management

JUNE TONSING

It wasn't that long ago when pilots did most of their flight planning and go/no-go decision-making at home, with (hopefully, anyway) a final check and assessment at the departure airport. The proliferation of mobile devices and associated apps for flight planning, weather briefing, and flight monitoring/tracking has drastically changed that picture. Today's pilots have a plethora of aviation apps to choose from and, though it can be a challenge to select the "best" one, the price point of most allows for no- or low-cost experimentation.

If you use any of today's mobile devices in your flight planning, you have probably populated your machine with at least basic flight planning apps. But did you know that there are also a number of risk assessment apps available? I initially made that discovery when I acquired an iPhone, and by the time I had also obtained an iPad, there were even more – easily findable by searching with keywords like "flight risk."

Risk has many manifestations, and the risk assessment apps I've found reflect that fact in the range of survey methods.

Finding the Right App

Because "best" is a highly individual notion when it comes to tools and apps, I won't attempt to review or suggest specific apps. But here are a few tips to consider as you seek to sort, sift and select the one that's right for you.

One factor you might consider is the app's survey method. Risk has many manifestations and the risk assessment apps I've found reflect that fact in the range of survey methods. One version uses a simple one-screen template with five wheels based on the PADEU formula: Pilot, Aircraft, Duration, Environment, and Urgency. The app lets you select a number from one to four in each category, and it then calculates a cumulative total for overall flight risk value. This one is very straightforward, easy to use, and quick enough to encourage more frequent use (e.g., right before a flight).

A more complex offering asks the pilot first to provide basic flight information, such as departure date, departure airport, arrival airport, tail number, etc. It then requires a "yes" or "no" response to more than 35 questions, many of which align with the safety limitations for 14 CFR part 135 certificate holders. For instance, the question topics include:

- Captain with less than 300 hours in type
- Scheduled duty day greater than 12 hours
- MEL /CDL Items (items related to safety of flight)
- Arrival airport: Circling approaches (best approach available)
- Arrival airport: No published approaches
- Departure/Arrival airport: Elevation greater than 3,000 MSL
- Departure/Arrival airport: Contaminated runway
- Departure/Arrival airport: Night Operation
- Departure/Arrival airport: Crosswinds greater than 15 knots forecast

In apps like this one, each answer factors into a total risk score. If the total risk score reaches a pre-set value, the app suggests contacting the chief pilot. In the more robust apps, you also have the option to email, print, or save the results of your risk assessment work. Although the more complex risk assessment apps take more time to use, they can be very valuable in helping you think through a more complete range of hazards and risk factors. And, though some were developed for commercial operations, there is no reason they can't be beneficial for personal flying as well.

The choice is yours, but please do choose and (more importantly) use a risk assessment app as a standard part of your flight planning and monitoring activity. It doesn't take long to take a moment for safety!

June Tonsing is a member of the FAASTeam staff. She is an Airline Transport Pilot, CFI and actively flies GA Aircraft.

FAA Aviation Safety Center

Oshkosh—FAA Safety Forums

July 23—29, 2012

	8:30 – 9:45	10:00 – 11:15	11:30 – 12:45	1:00 – 2:15	2:30 – 3:45	4:00 – 4:45
Monday, July 23	**Cohabitation of Gliders & Powered Aircraft** *Speaker: Lynnwood "Woody" Minar* *FAASTeam Rep/DPE* *GL0344473*	**Transitioning to Experimental Aircraft It's no Accident** *Mark Giron* *FAA* *GL0344474*	**Hey Tower, Am I in Trouble?** *Larry Cunningham* *Great Lakes* *Runway Safety Office* *GL0344474*	**Ditching in Lake Erie: What Happened & Lessons Learned!** *Mark Neal* *FAASTeam Rep* *GL0344477*	**The WINGS Program Does it Really Work?** *Bryan Neville* *FAASTeam Outreach Program Manager* *GL0344478*	**Cross-Country Planning Off the Chart** *Jonathan "JJ" Greenway* *Avemco Insurance* *GL0344479*
Tuesday, July 24	**Is Cockpit Technology Enabling Risk Taking Behavior?** *Phil Tartalone* *Eastern Michigan University* *GL0344485*	**Runway Signage and Avoiding Runway Incursions** *Jack Vandeventer* *FAASTeam Rep* *GL0344481*	**Mountain Flying Tips** *Bill Standerfer* *ATP / CFI* *GL0344482*	**Back to Basics Owner Maintenance** *Richard Peri* *Aircraft Electronics Association* *GL0344483*	**Engine Failure A Survival Guide** *Lynnwood "Woody" Minar* *FAASTeam Rep* *GL0344484*	**Use of Unmanned Aircraft** *Alan Frazier* *University of North Dakota* *GL0344480*
Wednesday, July 25	**Navigating the FAA Medxpress System** *Bob Lewis* *DO-AME,* *FAASTeam Rep* *GL0344486*	**VFR Charts: Little Known Facts** *Ronald Haag* *Abigail Smith* *AeroNav Products FAA* *GL0344487*	**IFR Charts: Little Known Facts** *Ronald Haag* *Abigail Smith* *AeroNav Products FAA* *GL0344488*	**The Kings on Risk Management** *John & Martha King* *King Schools* *GL0344489*	**Say Again? Radio Communications Done Right** *Andy Miller AOPA Air Safety Foundation* *GL0344491*	**When Does Aviation Safety Begin?** *John Teipen FAASTeam Rep Jane Tonsing* *FAA* *GL0344492*
Thursday, July 26	**Wanted: Alive! Andy Miller** *AOPA Air Safety Foundation* *GL0344493*	**Aviation Myths, Misconceptions, and Artifacts** *Rod Machado* *AviationSpeakers.com* *GL0344494*	**FORUM CLOSED** *Meet the Administrator* *EAA Pavilion #7*	**Are You an Accident Waiting to Happen?** *Greg Feith* *AviationSpeakers.com* *GL0344495*	**General Aviation and NextGen** *Gisele Mohler Director, NextGen Performance* *GL0344497*	**Hot Aeromedical Issues!** *Fred Tilton, MD Federal Air Surgeon* *GL0344498*
Friday, July 27	**Interceptor Operations TFRs and You** *LtCol Ray Bonita* *NORAD* *Peterson AFB, CO* *GL0344499*	**How Safety Management Can Benefit You!** *Fred Brisbois & James Viola FAA* *GL0344500*	**Dealing with Emergencies** *Larry Bothe* *FAASTeam Rep/DPE*	**Airspace, Airports, and Airmanship** *Wanda Zuege* *Master CFI* *GL0344502*	**How to Make a Living at Flight** *Instruction* *Doug Stewart* *SAFE* *GL0344503*	**Pilots, Thunderstorms, and ATC** *Darren Gaines* *Air Traffic Control* *CLE Center* *GL0344504*
Saturday, July 28	**Sport Pilot & Light Sport Aircraft—Before You Fly** *Sue Gardner* *FAA* *GL0344505*	**Thunderstorm Avoidance Using Datalink Nexrad Radar** *David A. Strahle M.D.* *GL0344506*	**Ditching and Water Survival** *Robert Shafer* *U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary* *GL0344507*	**Review of the General Aviation Accident Record** *Loren Groff* *NTSB* *GL0344508*	**Strategy to Avoid a Fatal GA Accident** *Thomas P. Turner* *FAASTeam Rep* *GL0344509*	**21st Century Aviation Maintenance Training** *Terry Michmerhuizen* *Western Michigan University* *GL0344510*
Sunday, July 29	Aviation Safety Videos Shown All Day Long—Come Join Your Fellow Pilots For a Movie or Two! (Times listed here are approximate start times) **0830—Friendly Flight Paths (GL0344511)** **0905—Fuel Awareness (GL0344512)** **0940—Midair Collision Avoidance (GL0344513)** **1025—Avoiding Spatial Disorientation (GL0344514)** **1105—Tips on Mountain Flying (GL0344515)** **1145—Pilot Operations at Non-Towered Airports (GL0344516)** **1235—Evaluating In-Flight Weather (GL0344517)** **1320—Single Pilot IFR (GL0344518)**					

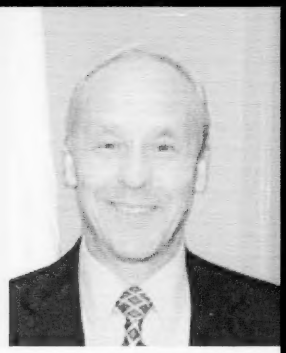
Appropriate **AMT / WINGS** credit will apply to events by using associated select **#GL0344XXX** listed in each box above.

FAA Forum & FAA Exhibit Hall Open Daily at 8:30 a.m.
Schedule is subject to change; for updates check the QR code or go to: http://qrs.ly/st1timd
Become a part of the FAA Safety Team, go to FAASafety.gov

Oshkosh FAA Safety Forums

FREDERICK E. TILTON, M.D.
FEDERAL AIR SURGEON

Aeromedical Advisory



The Future is Coming, and Soon...

Time and technology march on endlessly. But they also provide opportunities for change. When I originally announced MedXPress back in the spring of 2007, I explained that it was our intention to eventually make the entire process paperless, but we wanted to offer a transition time to give pilots the opportunity to get accustomed to an automated process. Well, that time of adjustment is ending soon. As you may have read, beginning October 1, 2012, pilots must use MedXpress to complete an electronic application for an Airman Medical and Student Pilot Certificate (FAA Form 8500-8).

Some people may object to this change on the grounds that the paper process works fine. It is important to understand, however, why this change is important for all of us. First, the paper process has many faults: it allows for too many errors; creates storage problems; and creates security risks. Also, the paper forms have occasionally been lost in the mail, and we are concerned that this poses unnecessary risks that the documents could be used inappropriately. In addition, to print, store, and distribute the paper Form 8500-8 costs more than $150,000 a year. And these are only a few of the issues with the paper process.

In the "non-electronic" era, the paper form was the only way for pilots to provide us with their medical history. But poor handwriting, spelling errors, and items left blank left us with incomplete or incorrect records which could create issues for pilots. Attempts to correct these issues with new technology date back to our first electronic systems in 1992. Further electronic advances helped to alleviate some of the storage and retrieval issues. But Aviation Medical Examiners (AME) still had to dedicate resources to transfer histories into the new systems and the handwriting and spelling issues remained unsolved.

When we launched MedXPress in 2007, there was an end-to-end solution that solved most, if not all, of our common problems. MedXPress has proven to be an excellent tool. In fact, the only issue we have is that we need to increase its usage. But this is not something we are requiring only to allow the FAA and AMEs to save money. There are benefits for you too, including a number of planned enhancements that will hopefully make the medical process easier, and that wouldn't be possible with the paper system.

One of the planned enhancements is to establish a tracking program that would allow pilots and AMEs to query the system to determine the status of medical applications. Another feature we would like to add is the ability to automatically forward the information that doesn't change, so that pilots don't have to reenter that information each time. We hope to start introducing new features in 2013.

We have made a great deal of progress toward our paperless goal since we originally announced it in January. I have talked about this project at aviation medical examiner seminars, and my deputy, Jim Fraser, talked about it at Sun n' Fun. Most of the feedback has been supportive, and we have received many suggestions that will help to make this initiative successful. We intend to continue to meet with pilots at AirVenture® in July to help explain the change and also to get additional feedback. We think this will be a change that can work for everyone, but we need your help to make it happen. So, if you're visiting Oshkosh in late July, please stop by and talk to me or any of the other members of the Office of Aerospace Medicine. Let us know how we can help with this transition, or with any other medical issue you might have. See you there.

Frederick E. Tilton, M.D., M.P.H., received both an M.S. and an M.D. degree from the University of New Mexico and an M.P.H. from the University of Texas. During a 26-year career with the U.S. Air Force, Dr. Tilton logged more than 4,000 hours as a command pilot and senior flight surgeon flying a variety of aircraft. He currently flies the Cessna Citation 560 XL.

Fast-track Your Medical Certificate

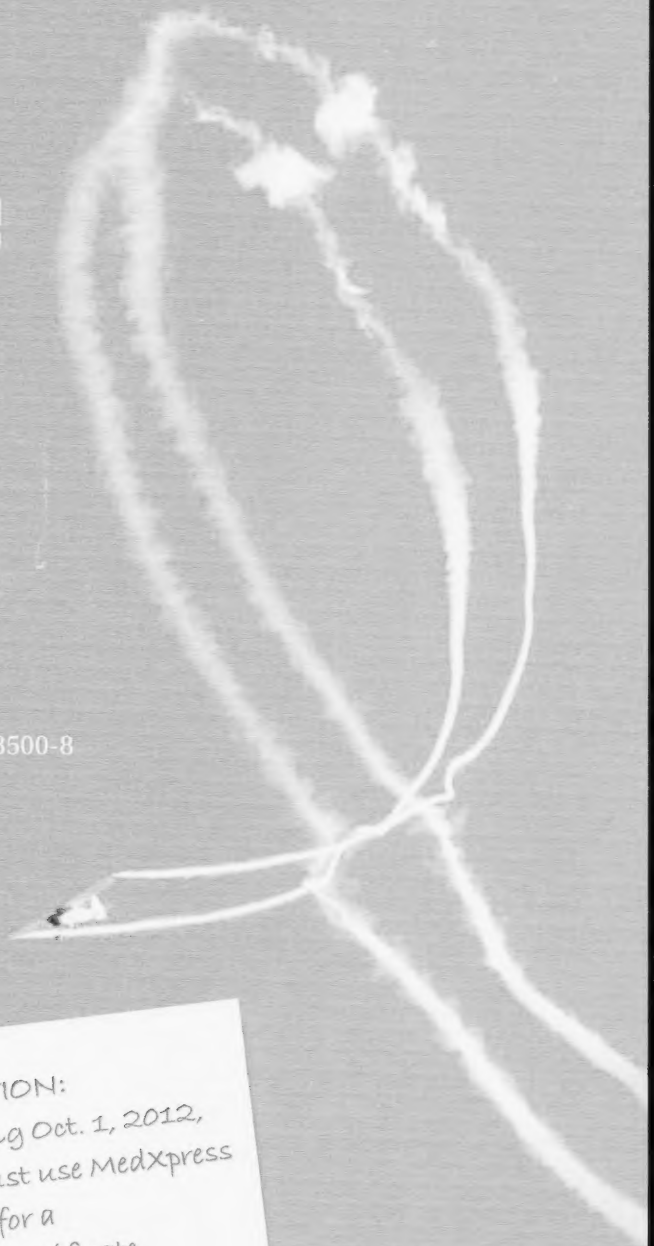
With FAA MedXPress, you can get your medical certificate faster than ever before.

Here's how: Before your appointment with your Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) simply go online to FAA MedXPress at https://medxpress.faa.gov/ and electronically complete FAA Form 8500-8. Information entered into MedXPress will be available to your AME to review prior to and at the time of your medical examination, if you provide a confirmation number.

With this online option you can complete FAA Form 8500-8 in the privacy and comfort of your home and submit it before your appointment.

The service is free and can be found at:

https://medxpress.faa.gov/



ATTENTION:
Beginning Oct. 1, 2012,
pilots must use MedXpress
to apply for a
Medical Certificate.

Ask Medical Certification

Q: Does the FAA have an approved list of medicines that pilots may take, specifically ARICEPT®? I take it as a preventive measure since I have a family history of Alzheimer's disease.

A: When the FAA considers a medication as being acceptable for medical certification it first of all considers whether the medical condition that the medication is being used for is not disqualifying. There are medications that are absolutely unacceptable, such as narcotic pain medications, but there is no list of medications. ARICEPT® is an unacceptable medication as is the medical condition Alzheimer's.

Q: At my last physical, my doctor expressed concern about my high blood pressure reading of 150/90. He told me to exercise more and reduce the amount of salt in my diet. Is this something I need to discuss with my aviation medical examiner (AME) immediately, or can it wait for my next exam?

A: Part 61.53 clearly states that if an airman develops a known disqualifying medical condition, or uses a known disqualifying medication or treatment, he/she must not fly. Our AMEs are instructed that if an airman comes into their office for an FAA examination and a solitary blood pressure reading is greater than or equal to 155/95 they may not issue a medical certificate. At a minimum, you should notify the FAA at your very next medical examination. High blood pressure is a disqualifying medical condition, but you can be granted medical certification, and in this particular condition without an authorization for Special Issuance [waiver]. This is because high blood pressure (hypertension) can be treated and most antihypertensive medications are acceptable for flying.

For more information, see the hypertension section of the Online Guide for Aviation Medical Examiners at: http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aam/ame/guide/dec_cons/disease_prot/hypertension/.

Q: How soon can you reapply after being denied a Class III medical certificate? I stopped taking the disqualifying drug (Mirapex) after my denial. When can I apply again?

A: The medication Mirapex is used mainly in the treatment of Parkinson's disease. It has a side effect of causing one to fall asleep without warning. It is an unacceptable medication. Once your physician removes you from the drug, FAA would like to see what being off the medication does to your medical condition. You should likely be off the medication several months before you attempt to gain back your medical certificate. You may need to start a new medication that will delay the recertification. The FAA will require a detailed note as to when the medication was discontinued and how the medical condition is currently behaving.

Q: My current medical certificate has expired. I submitted an application for a new third-class medical certificate, but my Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) is asking for more documentation on a medical condition I developed recently. May I continue to exercise sport-pilot privileges while this application is being processed?

A: This is an interesting question. If you had NOT applied for a current examination through the FAA I would say that you could. But since you now have a current examination that is "not issued," you cannot exercise sport-pilot privileges.

Send your question to SafetyBriefing@faa.gov. We'll forward it to the Aerospace Medical Certification Division without your name and publish the answer in an upcoming issue.

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Photo by Karen Helfert

Safe Flying is Fun Flying

HELEN WOODS

When people ask what I do for a living, I usually tell them that I am a flight instructor. I mention that I run a flight school specializing in sport pilot training and light-sport aircraft. I could reasonably say that I sell flight training. But when I think about what people are looking for when they come through the door of my school, I realize that they don't necessarily think about buying "flight training." They come because they want to have *fun*, and they see flight training as a means to that particular end. And so it is! Sadly, too many potential pilots drift away from flying — and sometimes *run* away — in part because of techniques used by some instructors to present the very important topic of aviation safety. Let's face it. The GA safety record leaves a lot to be desired, and that fact has created a pervasive public perception that "those little airplanes are just not safe." People who want to fly for fun thus have to overcome any personal or family investment in that perception before they even drive to the flight school parking lot. Having made that effort, though, our would-be pilots are too frequently discouraged by gloom and doom presentations that frighten, or rule-heavy academic presentations that bore them and send them searching elsewhere for fun.

Flying ceases to be fun when fear creeps into the cockpit.

Here's my philosophy: fun flying means flying safely, and safe flying is the key to having fun. It seems like an obvious point: in flying, as in other areas, the fun factor is inversely proportional to the fear factor. Flying ceases to be fun when fear creeps

into the cockpit. Using safe practices — which means having the right knowledge and skills — is the best way to maximize the fun and minimize the fear. Safe flying affords the opportunity for fun flying.

Whether you are a potential pilot looking for fun through flying, or an instructor who wants to help reverse both the poor public perception and pilot population decline, here are some thoughts on elements that contribute to a happy marriage of safety and fun in flight training.

Fun Follows Safety

What I've seen from many years of flight training on both sides (i.e., both as a student and as an instructor), is that it all starts with instructors who teach conservative and good judgment not merely by lecture, but primarily by example. Not everyone will agree with me on this next point, but I strongly believe that some of the instructor's ability to do so is tied to his or her motivation for teaching. Is the instructor's *primary* motivation a desire to teach and transmit a love of aviation, or a desire to build hours towards a "real" flying job? I've seen plenty of both. At least in my experience, instructors who do not consider flight instruction to be a "real" flying job often lack the ability to convey the fun-flying-is-safe-flying message to aspiring sport and recreational pilots.

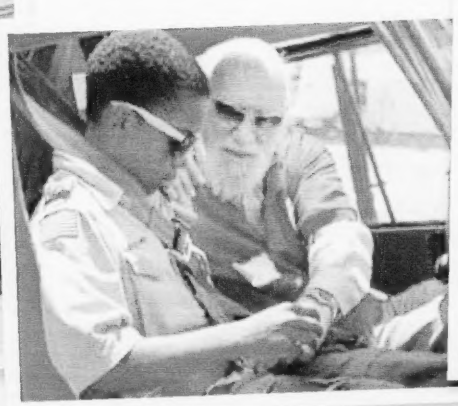
Safe flying affords the opportunity for fun flying.

When I am looking to hire an instructor, I want one who will lead by example. That means, for example, that he or she must be willing to forgo a flight if it does not align with conservative safety minimums. The core point is that the instructor must realize that the student will emulate not words, but his or her decision making processes and actual decisions. Here's another example, an all too common practice that makes me cringe every time I see it (but not at my school!): the instructor thinks the student is ready to solo, endorses the logbook accordingly ... and climbs out of the airplane while the propeller is in motion. I always take the time speak to instructors I see using this practice. They almost always tell me that they explained to the student that he or she should never allow a passenger to deplane while the prop is turning. As you might well imagine, the "do as I say, not as I do" approach does not work in flight instruction any more than in any other field of instruction. If you need proof, just take a look at accident statistics to see how many prop strike accidents happen every year.

Weather provides another great example of how instructors must teach by example. Are the flight conditions on the day of a proposed flight such that the instructor believes the student would be comfortable – not frightened – with dual instruction? Yes, pushing beyond a fledgling flyer's comfort level is part of learning, but it needs to be an appropriate and incremental push. For instance, I don't expose pre-solo students to certain gusty crosswinds they are not ready to handle. But it is both valuable and essential to teach them to safely handle such conditions.

Another question: are these conditions that the instructor would want see the student attempt as a newly-certificated pilot? The concept of safely pushing the envelope leads to another important tool for communicating the fun-flying-is-safe-flying message: personal minimums. I encourage introducing this concept at an early stage in flight training. It helps the student understand the safety value of making certain decisions in advance, and it also provides a great indicator of progress as the student's skills develop (i.e., progressing from a 3-knot crosswind endorsement to a 7-knot crosswind component). Personal minimums are also a

Photos by Karen Hellier



great tool for helping the student strengthen skills in judgment and decision making beyond direct emulation of the instructor.

The bottom line: I encourage instructors to remember that the student comes to us to have fun. Learning to fly an airplane is a secondary goal to "having fun" for the student pilot seeking to fly for personal recreation. No matter how well an instructor teaches a skill or a concept, the recreational student will not be motivated to return for another lesson if he or she did not have fun. Fear in flying is the mortal enemy of fun in flying, so a flight instructor must provide a learning environment in which the student feels comfortable, which means teaching, demonstrating, exemplifying, and demanding safe and conservative flying practices.

Safety Banishes Fear

There is an unfortunate cliché that "safety doesn't sell" (i.e., it conjures up dark pictures of gloom and doom). The good news is that we don't have to see safety as something to sell. On the contrary, since I am selling fun, safety has to be a given. The good news is that it is not at all hard to build safety into fun flying. When you are flying for sport and personal recreation, after all, there is never a "must-go" situation. Pilots that fly recreationally are flying for such great "causes" as eating hamburgers (or crab cakes if you happen to be in Maryland), not transporting human organs to sick patients, searching for overdue aircraft, or trying to make it to an important business meeting. As such, I try to convey that "get-there-itis" should have no hold on the pilot who flies for fun. Some of the fun-means-safety concepts I teach include the following:

Preflight: If there is any doubt about the condition of the airplane, have a mechanic look at it. If there is no mechanic available, cancel the flight. Could the flight have been done with the discrepancy? Perhaps...but why take the risk? Fear is never fun.

Crosswinds: If you have any doubt about recency or proficiency on a gusty crosswind day, seek refresher training with an instructor, or stay on the ground.

Fuel: Fear of fuel exhaustion is especially not fun! Never plan to arrive at your destination with just the minimum 30 minutes of fuel. Plan to have an hour or more in reserve, and remember that the extra fuel stop can be fun – it might add a new airport to your logbook, or turn out to offer the best $100 hamburger you've ever eaten.

Photo by James Williams

Night: If you are a sport pilot, plan to arrive at sunset, or even earlier, to leave some margin if the flight does not go as expected.

Proficiency: If you have not flown a particular aircraft model in a while, if you do not meet personal minimums for proficiency, or if you in any way feel "rusty," have fun flying with your favorite instructor to brush up.

Like I said, fear is never fun – and fun is what flying is all about, especially when you are flying for sport and personal recreation. Let good aviation safety practices protect you from fear, and lead the way to the kind of flying fun that attracted you to aviation in the first place.

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MARK SPENCER

Coming Out of the Woods:

Having Fun *Safely* in the Backcountry

No question about it, flying in the backcountry is a lot of fun. Keeping it fun requires keeping it safe, and that's a subject that could easily fill a library shelf. So when *FAA Safety Briefing* asked me to write about backcountry safety, I knew that I didn't want to just rehash information we all know is so critically important to safe backcountry flying — things like density altitude, mountain flying considerations, short field and soft field landing and takeoff techniques, and other such topics. Instead, I had in mind a challenge that has become increasingly obvious as we build up the backcountry inventory here in Arizona. I'm talking about a safety issue that you might not recognize until you start to fly in the backcountry. It specifically involves a lesson we all get during training for the very first pilot certificate, the rule (14 CFR 91.103) stating that "Each pilot in command shall, before beginning a flight, become familiar with all available information concerning that flight."

Photo by Stefanie Spencer

Photo by Stefanie Spencer

When "All Available" Is "Zero"

It sounds so simple, but the more I worked with fellow pilots on organizing events at sometimes little-known backcountry airstrips, the more I realized what a challenge gathering "all available information" can actually be for the backcountry pilot. That's because the information gauge often reads "slim to none." For example, there is one particular airstrip in Arizona that has a reputation of being the finest in the state. If I mentioned its name here, though, you'd be hard pressed to find *any* valuable written safety information. That's right. Nothing. There is simply no information on length, prevailing winds, obstacles, or other considerations a pilot should take into account before attempting to land there.

A sad and chilling anecdote makes the point about how serious that lack of information can be. In the wrecked remains of a C-180 a few years ago, there was a magazine left open to a page describing what an incredible place this airstrip was, in addition to providing some accurate safety information. That magazine article may have constituted every scrap of "all available information" this pilot was supposed to have for this airstrip.

I have wondered whether more information could have prevented that accident. While challenging, this is a perfectly safe airstrip that even sees an occasional Bonanza. It was only when another accident occurred there, however, when the pilot community began to discuss it more openly. The story I heard over and over again went something like this: "Oh, he got caught in that downdraft that hangs out at the approach end. You just can't drag it in there, ya know."

Well, I confess: I didn't know, and I'm willing to bet that many other pilots didn't know, either. It was around this time I began to realize the magnitude of the challenge that exists in finding important and accurate information on some of these little gems. If you are a backcountry pilot, you've heard from your friends about these airstrips, the ones that don't have an identifier, aren't on AirNav, and certainly aren't listed in the Airport/Facility Directory (A/FD). Think about that for a second. Have you ever tried to hold an event at an airstrip where there is no published Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF)?

Digging for Necessary Nuggets

I can hear the rumbling already: "Okay, Mark, you've defined a potential problem. So what's the solution?" Bottom line: There are no silver bullets or easy solutions. Still, there are some common sense things you can do to increase the amount of information you have on a backcountry airstrip before taking your chances on a glossy magazine photo.

First, check with your local pilot organizations, especially if you have a backcountry group. Here in Arizona, we have started publishing pamphlets that convey basic information such as a temporary CTAF for events held at the location, field length, elevation, and all the other items you'd expect in the A/FD. Our pamphlets also include contact information for those airstrips that require prior permission. These documents are available through the Arizona Pilot's Association (www.AZPilots.org). The Utah Backcountry Pilots group also provides excellent information on its website, as do our sister organizations in Idaho and Montana. Simply put, these organizations are a great model for those in areas just growing their backcountry inventory.

I realized what a challenge that "all available information" can be for the backcountry pilot. That's because the information gauge often reads "slim to none."

Very often, your local backcountry organization will also be able to recommend a CFI with local backcountry experience. Rather than just talk to that CFI, though, why not make your first flight into the target airstrip a dual flight with the expert in the right seat? That is exactly what I did before attending my first backcountry fly-in at the Negrito airstrip in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico, and I'm very glad I made that decision.

Another idea is to check in with one of the national organizations such as the Recreational Aviation Foundation (www.TheRAF.org). Other good places to check include www.backcountrypilots.org and www.shortfield.com, the latter of which offers one of the best overall databases available

today. And don't forget to check with the aviation or aeronautics division of your state's Department of Transportation. Some now maintain a database on airstrips, including backcountry or auxiliary landing fields.

Still another source is the land manager, if the airstrip is located on public land. For example, the Spotted Bear District of the Flathead National Forest in Montana offers an informational pamphlet about the airstrips located within this district. You can find these documents by contacting the District Office, the Montana Pilots' Association, or the Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF). And, of course, the obvious source of first-hand information for a private airstrip is the land owner.

And for a great overview, one of the most exhaustive sources of information is Galen Hanselman, author of books like *Fly Idaho, Fly the Big Sky, Fly Utah,* and *Air Baja*.

Be Smart, and Do Your Part

The long term solution to this challenge is beginning to unfold as backcountry aviation comes out of the woods, so to speak, and becomes more of a mainstream recreational activity and method of access to public lands across the country. With this trend emerging, there is a now a lot more open discussion about those sometimes elusive, but important, pieces of information about a particular airstrip. You can do your part by becoming part of your local backcountry organization, as well as a national organization such as the RAF.

If nothing else, I hope you'll think twice before landing at a backcountry airstrip when all you have is hearsay, or a fellow pilot telling you only that "I went in there. It's no problem!" The fact that another pilot survived the experience doesn't even begin to provide the information needed to ensure that you survive it as well. Also consider that the full picture on a backcountry airstrip's characteristics can only develop over time, through many operations at various times of day and season. And don't neglect to learn from the mistakes of others. When there have been accidents or incidents at an airstrip, a study of these events will almost always be valuable in providing data on particular issues at that airstrip.

Finally, doing your part means sharing what you know. If you have, or over time gather information from your own research and experience, you may have a start on a safety pamphlet that you can make available to others.

Mark Spencer is an engineer working in the radio, radar, and avionics field for over 30 years. As a private pilot and the RAF's Arizona Liaison, he works closely with public land managers and the APA in opening backcountry recreational airstrips on public lands in Arizona.

Photo by Stefanie Spencer

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration
Report Wildlife Strikes
http://wildlife.faa.gov http://www.faa.gov/wireless
USDA

SUSAN PARSON

Flying Just Because

A LightHawk donated flight allows scientists in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula to monitor the health of coastal areas which are important for fishing, tourism and recreation.

Chris Boyer/ LightHawk Photo

There is nothing wrong with flying "just because." Some of my happiest and most memorable flights could only fall into the category of aerial joyriding. Still, there is much joy and great fun to be had in directing some of your flight activity to a good cause. That's because flying for a purpose has multiple benefits. Done properly (we'll get to that shortly), it can help you as a pilot by providing opportunities to maintain and sharpen your skills. Service-oriented flying can be of immeasurable value to the individuals and organizations it directly helps. Still another benefit is its potential to enhance the public perception of general aviation as a valuable and beneficial activity.

As every pilot knows, the regulations — Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR 91.103) — require you to become familiar with all available information concerning your flight. That rule does not list the specific items addressed in this article; still, the stakes in flying for a cause are such that it makes sense to adopt the "all available information" approach. You need to find a cause that aligns with your interests, pilot skills, and aircraft capability. You need to know the rules for charitable flying, whether for nonprofit or fund-raising purposes. And, of course, you need to understand how to operate safely in the context of flying for a charitable purpose.

So let's take a look at what it takes to be a properly-prepared volunteer pilot.

Finding the Right Cause

The original service flying organization may be the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force formed immediately prior to America's involvement in World War II. On the non-governmental side, one of the oldest organizations is LightHawk, a volunteer-based environmental aviation organization formed in 1979 to offer flight in support

of conservation efforts. Since then, the number and nature of nonprofit volunteer flying organizations have become almost as diverse as the range of pilots and planes. Causes served include:

- Health and medical (e.g., transport of patients and/or family members, including wounded veterans)
- Disaster relief (e.g., carrying supplies to disaster-affected areas)
- Emergency services (e.g., CAP search and rescue)
- Special needs (e.g., transporting sick children to dream activities)
- Animal rescue (e.g., transporting pets to adoptive homes)
- Environment (e.g., flights in support of conservation)
- Education (e.g., EAA Young Eagles and CAP cadet orientation flight)

A good starting point for your search could be an organization such as the Air Care Alliance (ACA). Formed in the 1990s, ACA supports nonprofit volunteer flying groups, provides information to pilots seeking to serve, and directs members of the public to organizations that can meet their particular needs.

ACA also maintains a listing of organizations engaged in humanitarian flying that are supported by volunteers. However, before participating in any flying activity, you should make your own evaluation of a group to determine if its requirements, operations, guidelines, and goals are a good match. As a would-be volunteer pilot, you need to pay particular attention to the group's pilot qualification requirements, and also check to ensure that its activities are compatible with the kind of aircraft you can offer.

Checking the Rules

Pilots schooled in the rules concerning private pilot privileges and limitations (14 CFR 61.113) may have questions about what they can and cannot do with respect to volunteer service flying (also called "public benefit flying"). A full discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of a single article, and please do not construe it as legal advice! But here are the basics.

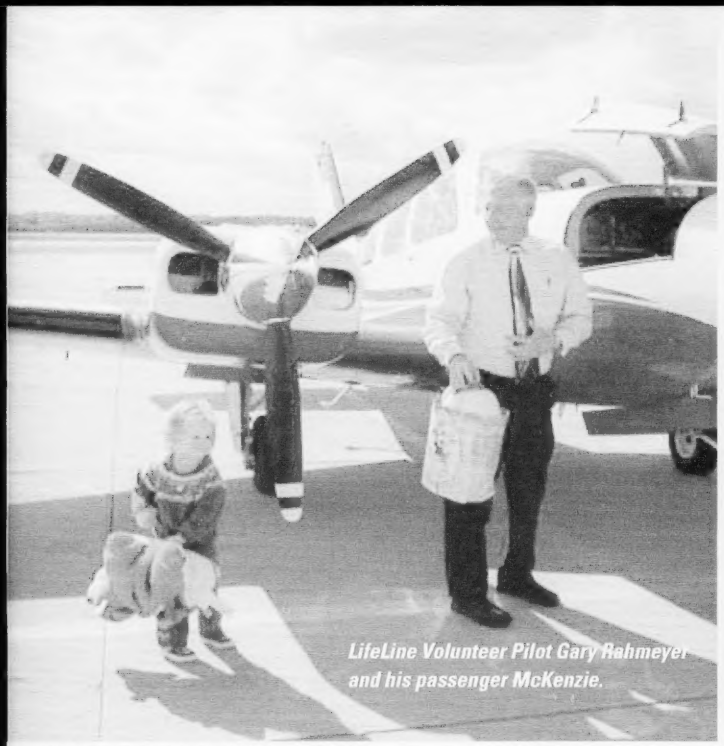
Can the pilot be paid? For a number of reasons, public benefit flying that does not constitute a commercial operation operates under 14 CFR part 91. That means pilots generally may not accept payment (compensation) for the flight. Although pilots have historically been required to donate both piloting services and flying expenses (aircraft use, fuel, oil) to the organization, FAA reauthorization legislation signed in February 2012 contains provisions for allowing aircraft owners and operators to accept reimbursement from a volunteer pilot organization for the fuel costs associated with providing transportation for an individual or organ for medical purposes. The FAA has not yet determined those conditions that would need to be met for a pilot to be reimbursed under this law.

What about tax deductions? Some pilots have asked about possible conflicts between IRS rules, which may allow charitable deductions for flying expenses contributed to a 501(c)(3) organization, and FAA rules, which prohibit any form of compensation to a private pilot, except under very limited circumstances. As you probably know, the FAA interprets "compensation" as meaning the receipt of anything of value. However, the FAA Chief Counsel's office has clarified the issue of charitable deductions in a number of interpretations. Specifically, it has stated that "since Congress has provided for the tax deductibility of some costs of charitable acts, the FAA will not treat charitable deductions of such costs, standing alone, as constituting 'compensation or hire' for the purpose of enforcing [the Federal Aviation Regulations]." *(Note: This interpretation is specifically addressed in FAA Order 8900.1 (Volume 4, Chapter 5, Section 1, paragraph 4-922) which also states that "inspectors should not treat the tax deductibility of costs as constituting 'compensation or hire' when flights are conducted for humanitarian purposes.")*

The stakes in flying for a cause are such that it makes sense to adopt the "all available information" approach to planning.

Can I fly for charity fundraising flights? Charity fundraising flights are not the same as volunteer flying for a nonprofit organization such as those listed on the ACA's website, but you can still participate if you meet the requirements outlined in 14 CFR 91.146 (which also references the safety provisions of part 136, subpart A). Be sure to read the regulation before you offer to participate in such a flight, but some of the general requirements are as follows:

- Pilots are limited to nonstop, day VFR flights that begin and end at the same airport and are conducted within a 25 statute mile radius of the departure airport.



LifeLine Volunteer Pilot Gary Rahmeyer and his passenger McKenzie.

Photo courtesy of LifeLine Pilots

Angel Flight Pilot George Grall, along with his wife Julie and their dog Molly, prepare to transport 9 year-old Caleb to a clinic in Cleveland for surgery.

Photo courtesy Angel Flight Central

- Private pilots must have at least 500 hours total flight time in order to participate.
- Before takeoff, pilots must brief passengers on seatbelt use, aircraft egress, and (for overwater flights) ditching procedures and use of life preservers.
- For overwater flights beyond the shoreline, passengers are required to wear life preservers (unless the overwater operation is necessary only for takeoff or landing or other limited exceptions apply).

Lifeguard and Compassion Call Signs

You have probably heard, or perhaps even used, the "Lifeguard" call sign used by pilots carrying patients or organs in time-critical situations. The Lifeguard call sign cues ATC to the nature of the flight so it can receive priority handling whenever possible.

Because Lifeguard was not appropriate for other public benefit flights, The Air Care Alliance worked with the FAA to obtain the "Compassion" call sign. Use of Compassion conveys to ATC that the aircraft is engaged in an operation that might require special handling, such as slower rates of climb/descent or circling over an area.

The ACA administers the Compassion call sign and coordinates its use for volunteer service flying. To file a flight plan for use of this call sign, the pilot uses the "CMF" identifier with the last four digits of the N-number. CMF lets ATC know that the flight may need special assistance to accomplish its service flying objective.

For more information, please visit the ACA website (www.aircareall.org).

The rule also limits the number of events in which sponsors and pilots may participate to four per calendar year for a charitable or nonprofit cause, and just one per calendar year for community events as defined in the rule.

What about liability? Many volunteer flying organizations require pilots to carry insurance. Even if it is not a requirement, though, you would be wise to consult your insurance company about appropriate coverage.

Keeping Everyone Safe

It is always bad when an accident occurs, but it is especially tragic when pilots and their passengers get hurt (or worse) in the course of volunteer service flying activities. In the wake of several volunteer medical airlift accidents, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic, the Air Care Alliance, and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) hosted a volunteer pilot safety stand down seminar in March 2011 at the NTSB Training Center in Virginia. The purpose of the event was to raise safety awareness for volunteer flying, and help the ACA and its constituent volunteer pilot organizations find ways to enhance safety for volunteer pilots and their passengers.

I was fortunate to serve as a presenter for this event, which drew more than 200 pilots active in volunteer service flying activities. The most compelling message came from AOPA Foundation president Bruce Landsberg, who strongly counseled against the "mission mindset" that pervades the

language and, too often, the thinking of volunteer service pilots. Landsberg's view is that safety would be better served if volunteer pilots think of their operations as "flights" rather than "missions," a term that can consciously or unconsciously influence the pilot to push the limits of flying skill or aircraft performance too far.

Another key point is the need to recognize that a volunteer service flight deserves more than your usual level of planning and monitoring. A few tips, aligned to correspond with the Pilot – Aircraft – enVironment – External pressures (PAVE) risk management checklist:

Pilot and Passengers: In addition to making an honest assessment of your fitness for flight (e.g., IMSAFE - free of **I**llness, **M**edication, **S**tress, **A**lcohol, **F**atigue, improper **E**ating), you need to be sure the service flight will not violate your personal minimums. If you have not yet established written personal minimums, please take the time to do so before you consider volunteer service flying. For tips and a worksheet, please see the May/June 2006 issue of *FAA Safety Briefing*. Bottom line: It is your right, and indeed your obligation, to say "no" if you are not comfortable making the flight, or if you are asked to do something that puts you or your passengers at risk.

With respect to passengers, you need to pay special attention to your passenger briefing responsibilities, since this trip may be the first GA flying experience for many. For a simple guide and passenger briefing card, see the January/February 2007 issue of *FAA Safety Briefing*. The creators of the Aviators' Model Code of Conduct offer a more detailed sample passenger briefing package at www.secureav.com .

Although a briefing would be lost on non-human passengers, such as the puppies aboard a Pilots N Paws animal rescue flight I did with a friend, be sure that animals and cargo are properly secured. If you are tempted to avoid crates, just imagine trying to fly while dealing with the distraction of a thrashing and frightened animal.

Aircraft: In addition to ensuring that the aircraft is airworthy and in a condition for safe flight, you'll want to carefully calculate aircraft performance with a reasonable safety margin. You may have superior pilot skills, but even the best piloting cannot overcome aircraft performance limitations for weight and balance, density altitude, takeoff and landing performance and, of course, fuel requirements. With passengers and cargo aboard, those limits may be very different from those you are accustomed to in local solo flying.

enVironment: Remember to evaluate weather in terms of the pilot/aircraft combination, or team, and also in terms of your established personal minimums. And, because volunteer service flying may often require you to operate in unfamiliar territory, be especially diligent in reviewing the terrain, airspace, and airports to be used for this flight.

External pressures: To repeat Mr. Landsberg's advice, remember that it is a "flight" rather than a "mission." Yes, your passengers may be disappointed if you make a no-go decision. But think how much greater the pain could be if you choose to press ahead in risky conditions.

Pay particular attention to the group's pilot qualification requirements, and check to ensure that its activities are compatible with the kind of aircraft you can offer.

Another safety resource is a new online course developed by ACA and the AOPA Air Safety Institute. Offered free of charge, the course is specifically designed to address some of the safety issues and challenges involved in volunteer pilot operations.

Making It Worthwhile

Volunteer service flying carries a lot of responsibility, and it does require some effort to do it right. But you do not have to work to make it worthwhile — and that alone makes it fun.

Susan Parson (susan.parson@faa.gov., or @avi8rix for Twitter fans) is editor of FAA Safety Briefing. *She is an active general aviation pilot and flight instructor.*

Learn More

Air Care Alliance
www.aircareall.org

AOPA Guide to Charitable/Nonprofit/Community Sightseeing Flights
www.aopa.org/whatsnew/regulatory/charity.html

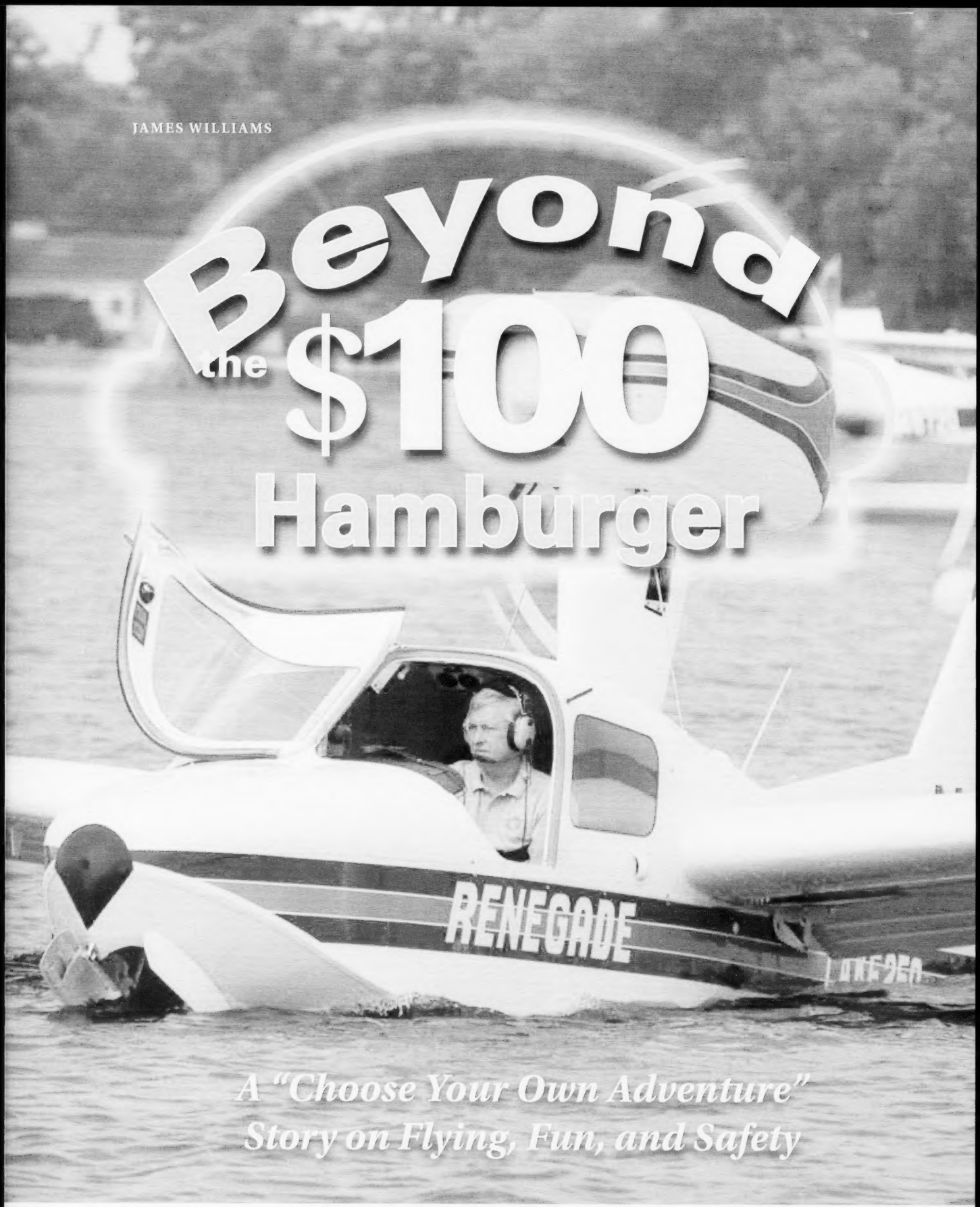
AOPA Air Safety Institute
www.aopa.org/asf

Aviator's Model Code of Conduct
www.secureav.com

FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 4, Chapter 5, Section 1, Paragraph 4-922
http://fsims.faa.gov

JAMES WILLIAMS

Beyond the $100 Hamburger



A "Choose Your Own Adventure" Story on Flying, Fun, and Safety

Photo by James Williams

What do I do now? That's one of the most common questions that arise once you earn that coveted airman certificate or rating. After a few flights of showing off your new skills to friends and family, or getting a $100 hamburger or two, you again arrive at that bedeviling question: What's next?

To answer that question first requires some introspection for us as pilots. In my experience (and admittedly oversimplified view) there are two kinds of pilots: those who like to go places (the utilitarian pilot), and those who simply enjoy being at the controls (the free spirit). While pilots may certainly enjoy both modes, they probably were inspired by or appreciate one more than the other. My primary motivation was always traveling. It even manifested itself in how I viewed airplanes. I tended to look at an airplane in terms of payload, range, and cruising speed. That led to my personal belief that the fixed gear Cessna 182 may well be the perfect GA airplane (you can disagree all you like, but you're wrong).

Once we determine our primary motivation, we can design some great experiences to expand our flight envelope, the idea being that a list of fun activities will enable us to build experience, stay proficient, and develop skills to help us become safer pilots. Think of it as a "choose your own adventure" style of becoming a more well-balanced aviator.

Add a New Surface

Whether it is water, snow, or just grass, there's no faster way to open up an airport than to add a surface type. Water requires an additional rating, but the other two only require some training and prudence. In fact, as a matter of course, you've already completed a good amount of grass strip training as part of your soft field training for your basic certificate. Although, if you've never actually landed on grass, it's a good idea to spend a little time with an instructor to make sure your skills are where they need to be before you try a grass strip. Also, some insurance companies and/or FBOs may limit or exclude grass strips, so be sure to check your coverage as well as your FBO's policies before leaving. Another issue is that several grass strips are private airports and may require prior permission to land. Many owners would probably be more than happy for you to stop by. But, to prevent a pitch fork welcome, make an inquiry first.

While training is the only hard requirement to operate off of grass, water or snow-covered surfaces require both specialized training and equipment. Learning either of these skills could be the subject of entire articles, so I will leave further technical discussion of those topics to the experts. However, one thing to make sure of is that you can perform in the conditions in which you expect to use your new skill. For example, it's important to remember that the way you load an aircraft will be different if you're going camping (whether it be on wheels, skis, or floats) than when you're training. To gain that real-world experience, you might consider loading up your aircraft beyond a normal everyday situation (within weight and balance limitations, of course) and practice with an instructor that way. We always want our training to be safe and realistic.

Add a Scope

When I discuss scope I am using it in terms of scale. I think this is more appropriate because when you scale up the length of a trip, it changes not only

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Photo by Tom Hoffmann

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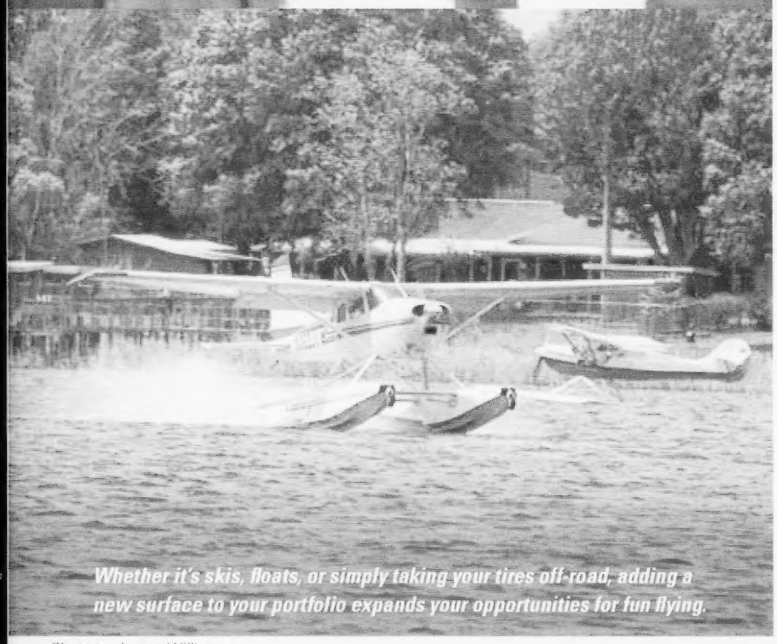

Whether it's skis, floats, or simply taking your tires off-road, adding a new surface to your portfolio expands your opportunities for fun flying.

Photo by James Williams

the level of detail needed in your planning, but also the breadth of subjects you have to consider when making your plans. Hence, the entire scope of the preparations changes. Most of our planning in training is somewhat perfunctory since time and cost pressures have a tendency to boil down a trip to minimum requirements. A 50 nautical mile distance requirement means a "cross country" flight can take as little as an hour in many GA aircraft. While there are lessons to be learned with a such a flight, they do lack some of the more demanding requirements. The odds are your flight won't include changing weather, changing terrain, real fuel planning, the logistics of handling maintenance away from home, or evaluating multiple courses. These are some of the things that come into play when you enhance the scope of your operations.

For a more detailed discussion of long range planning please see the original "Beyond the $100 Hamburger" article I wrote in the May/June 2007 issue (www.faa.gov/news/safety_briefing/2007/media/mayjune2007.pdf). The article focuses more specifically on the considerations in planning and executing long range flights. By adding scope to our set of tools, we can open up still more opportunities to use our skills in a fun way. Once you test out your new scope, you can then create what I'll call an air cruise. Let's say you wanted to visit the Grand Canyon; any other destination on the way is now open to you. You'd be surprised how well a course change of 100 miles or more can be accommodated on a long enough trip assuming the deviation is roughly along the way. In an age of automated flight planning, it's definitely worth running the numbers. It's also a good way of not letting your destination be the limit of your fun.

Adding a Skill or Sharpening One

Another way to use that newly minted certificate is to add to it, or expand on the skill you've already been trained for. Adding a high performance, complex, or tail wheel endorsement, for example, can expand the number of aircraft you're allowed to fly. It also enhances the skills you have in various ways. More powerful engines make you pay closer attention to power settings and managing the engine throughout the flight. Flying a complex aircraft should improve your checklist discipline, as the aircraft's systems are more complicated. Training in a tail wheel aircraft can heighten your awareness of crosswind techniques and demand more precise execution during landing. A further benefit of this

type of training is that what you learn can easily carry over and apply to whatever aircraft you're in.

Additionally, aerobatics and upset recovery training are excellent ways of expanding not only your stick and rudder skills, but also your safety margin. There are valuable lessons to be learned by flying right up to the edge of controlled flight and beyond. First, you learn where that line is and what it's like approaching it. Second, you learn to recover, and the value of that is obvious. Beyond those advantages, aerobatic training bestows pilots with a greater level of aircraft control. It's the equivalent of sharpening the pencil that represents your skills. You'll now have much finer control of the aircraft, just as the sharpened pencil can sketch much finer detail.

Putting it All Together

Here's where the magic happens. By combining the elements we've discussed, we can create our own adventures that maintain and improve our skills, all the while providing enjoyment and great memories. One example would be to plan an air camping trip. You could test not only your planning skills, but also your backcountry flying skills. (For more information on back country flying, see "Coming Out of the Woods" on page 12.) Such a trip would also give you a chance to camp your way around the country, while challenging both your planning and packing skills.

Another idea would be to plan a trip to attend an advanced flight training course, like formation flying or the aforementioned upset recovery classes. It would not only exercise the planning muscles, but allow you to be in good trim arriving at the class having just flown in. The idea could be as simple as flying to a pancake breakfast to enter a landing contest.

Once you add these skills to your tool box it is important to exercise them as time allows. The whole idea is to provide yourself with new opportunities to spread your wings.

Of course, these are just my suggestions; what do you think? If you have any ideas, please let us, and more importantly, your fellow airmen know. You might be able to turn someone on to a new adventure they hadn't ever considered. If we want to have a vibrant, growing, and safe GA system, we're definitely in it together.

James Williams is FAA Safety Briefing's *assistant editor and photo editor. He is also a pilot and ground instructor.*

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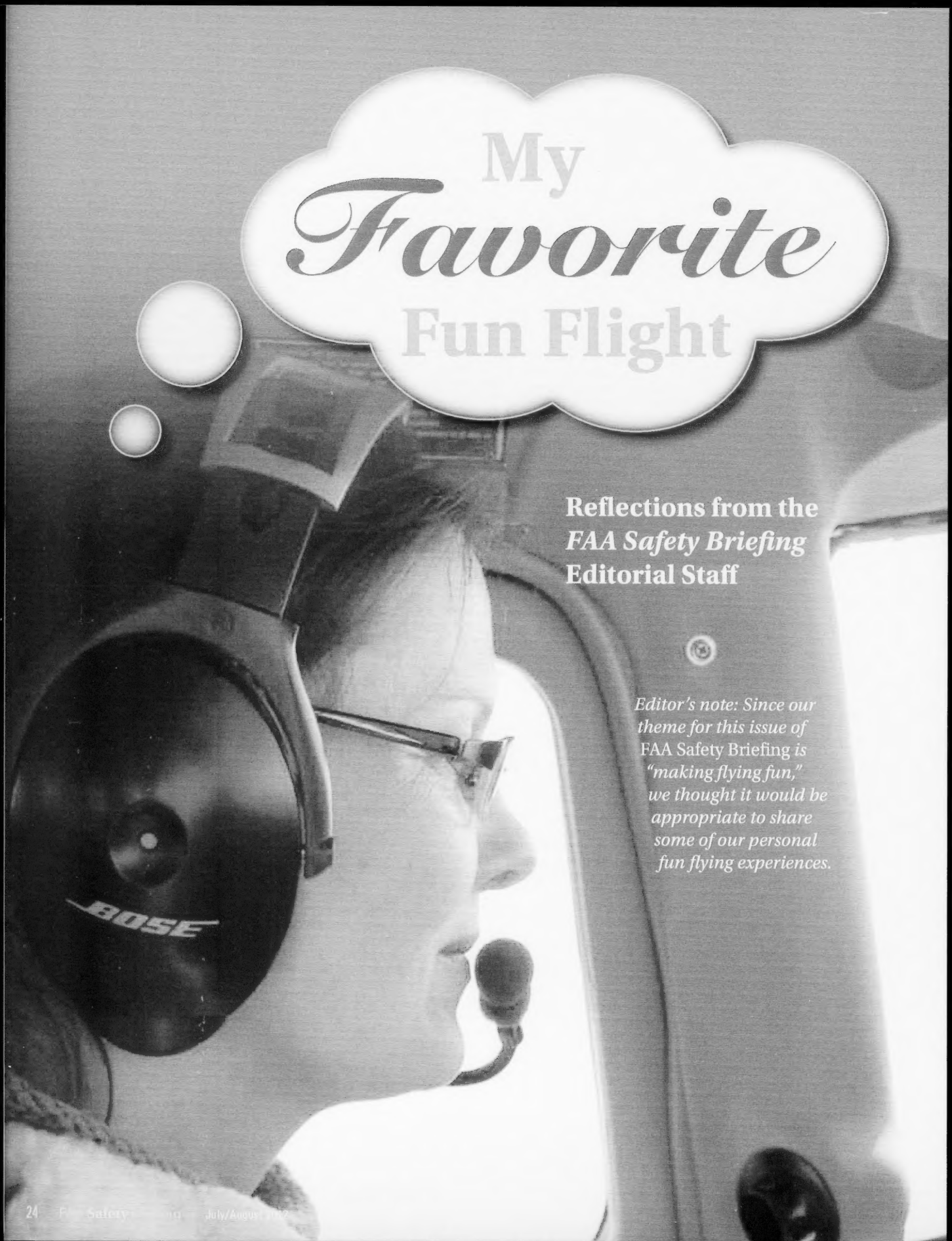


Reflections from the *FAA Safety Briefing* Editorial Staff

Editor's note: Since our theme for this issue of FAA Safety Briefing *is "making flying fun," we thought it would be appropriate to share some of our personal fun flying experiences.*

photo by Lissa Klueter

Editor Susan Parson and pilot pal David Klueter strike an Arizona preflight pose as Lissa Klueter wields the camera.

An amAZing adventure - *Susan Parson*

After months of saying how great it would be to fly GA out to my home in Arizona, my friends Lissa, David, and I decided to make it happen in their well-appointed C206 *Stationair*. None of us had ever made such a trip, but we knew it would be an adventure. We knew we would learn a lot. And we knew it would be fun.

Two principles guided our planning. First, everyone had a veto. Second, divide and conquer. For the flight, we divided the initial straight-line course from KJYO-KFFZ (Mesa's Falcon Field) into 300-mile segments adjusted for airspace, terrain, and ground facilities. We also divided the list for making arrangements. Fortunately for David and me, Lissa volunteered to head up inflight catering, so we happily munched our way across the U.S.

KJYO-KLEX: The opening segment was almost entirely IMC. Ferocious headwinds put our Lexington lunch plans with Arlynn McMahon, 2009 CFI of the Year, and her husband Charlie in doubt. But we closely monitored fuel consumption and, to ensure that we were not tempted to push too far, we established several "tripwire" decision points. The headwinds eventually abated enough to land at KLEX with over an hour's fuel remaining.

KLEX-KTBN: Refueled and refreshed, we launched into clearing skies and pointed toward our planned overnight stop in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Our serene aerial perch provided a sobering view of the extensive flooding in the Midwest that spring. The vast expanse of affected land was a humbling reminder of Mother Nature's power, and we had a sharper appreciation for the plight of those affected on the ground.

KTBN-KWDG: As we poured milk over our breakfast cereal, we also pored over a challenging forecast. Weather through Missouri was clear, but Oklahoma was a different story with lines of convective activity forming along the route to Enid Woodring Regional Airport. After much discussion, we agreed that we could safely fly to the Missouri/Oklahoma state line. We had viable VFR and MVFR alternates in the Missouri/Oklahoma/Kansas area, plus datalink to help with overall weather avoidance strategy. We got lucky: The worst of the weather moved nicely north before we crossed into Oklahoma. Helpful controllers and high cloud bases provided an additional margin for safety and, with minor course deviations, we easily made it to KWDG (with kudos to Lissa for a textbook crosswind landing).

KWDG-KDUX: As we motored to Moore County Airport in Dumas, Texas, we were all struck by the vastness and apparent emptiness of west Texas. It was one thing to note from our planning map how few and far between facilities were out West, but quite another to see it from the sky. And, in stark contrast to the bustling GA airports of the East coast, we were stunned to find ourselves completely alone in the cozy KDUX terminal building.

KDUX-KSAF: Flying over the apparently unoccupied moonscape of eastern NM and bedeviled by strong mountain wave action most of the way, we were immensely grateful for the reliability of modern engines and avionics. We have three particular memories of arrival at KSAF. First was the challenge of descending to pattern altitude after being kept high over the mountains. Second was the incredible friendliness of the KSAF tower controllers. Third was the welcome wagon provided by Larry, a pilot friend of a friend who had offered to meet us. One of the world's more colorful and somewhat mysterious characters, Larry provided an expert tour of old Santa Fe, excellent Mexican cuisine, and rollicking good stories.

What a thrill it was to see such majesty from a perspective that only GA can provide.

KSAF-KFFZ: Departure from KSAF the following morning was also memorable: The ever-reliable *Stationair's* engine faltered and stopped before we even managed to leave our tiedown space. Local mechanics quickly deduced serious plug fouling from failure to fully adjust flatland leaning practices to the higher density altitude. After the fix and a friendly lesson in what "aggressive" leaning really means, we lifted off on the last leg of our outbound

journey. It was uneventful – almost. An hour from Mesa's Falcon Field, ATC issued a routing amendment. When bumpy air jostled the pilot's finger enough to mistakenly hit the data card, the flight plan vaporized as the GPS dropped out to reboot. The data card debacle also knocked out the handheld GPS that we had conveniently (we thought) configured for cross-talk with the panel-mounted GPS. Backup charts and a detailed flight log enabled a quick recovery, but it was a compelling reminder that GPS is not bulletproof.

After three days, many miles, and magical memories, the concluding and crowning glory was routing that took us right over Arizona's famous Four Peaks Mountain. What a thrill it was to see such majesty from a perspective that only GA can provide. We are truly blessed to fly.

If You Can Make it Here - *Tom Hoffmann*

Learning to fly in the New York City metropolitan area was not without its challenges. Jam-packed airspace, the lightning-fast tempo of ATC, and the perpetual smoggy haze of the city conspired to keep me on my toes at all times. Despite the presence of these and other "training enhancements" indigenous to many large cities, there was an absolute jewel of an opportunity right in my own backyard (which made putting up with some of these challenges more than worth it).

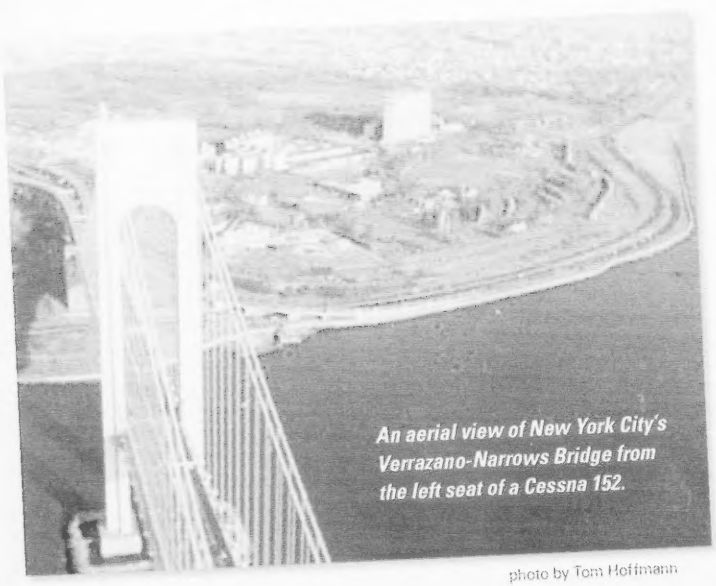
I remember the smile on my face as we saw traffic backed up for miles in both directions on the bridge, all the while thinking that this was by far the most pleasant crossing of the Verrazano I had ever experienced.

I'm referring to the famous New York City VFR corridor — a flightpath that takes you straight through the heart of the city, exposing all its glory and wonder from a perspective many New Yorkers rarely get to see. After learning about this unique opportunity in the latter stages of my private pilot training, it quickly rose to the top of my post-check-ride destination wish list. I recall it even served as a source of inspiration during the demanding final legs of my training and preparation for a pilot certificate.

Several months after a successful pass, my best friend—and now fellow private pilot—Richie and I made plans to fly the corridor. I didn't realize it then, but living in New York City provided me with an immense advantage given the lack of formal procedures for flying the VFR Corridor at the time. We had the benefit of tribal knowledge; tips and anecdotal aids gleaned from fellow area pilots and instructors who had flown the route before us. After a painstaking review of the terminal area charts, we grilled these pilots for every nuance of the flight so as not to have any unwanted surprises.

And then, on one brisk and sunny January morning in 1992, Richie and I departed Long Island Mac Arthur Airport (KISP) in a rented Cessna 152 for what would be one of my most memorable flights. A brilliant blue sky provided the perfect background for the familiar skyline that grew larger by the minute. Flying around the south shore of Queens and Brooklyn, we traversed the corridor from south to north, first crossing between the nearly 700-foot towers of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. I remember the smile on my face as we saw traffic backed up for miles in both directions on the bridge, all the while thinking that this was by far the most pleasant crossing of the Verrazano I had ever experienced. Minutes later we were face-to-face with several of New York's most iconic landmarks: the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Empire State Building, and Yankee Stadium. However, none seemed more majestic than the World Trade Center towers, which even from an altitude of 800 feet still seemed to tower over us.

Before I knew it, the Tappan Zee Bridge was in sight marking the end of our momentous flight. It was an enjoyable flight, but also a very hectic one. I think between monitoring the radio and feverishly watching for traffic, the flight seemed to end way too quickly. Still, it was worth every second.



An aerial view of New York City's Verrazano-Narrows Bridge from the left seat of a Cessna 152.

photo by Tom Hoffmann

The good news for anyone wishing to fly this route now is that you don't have to rely on tribal knowledge alone to get you safely through. In 2009, the FAA published an amendment to 14 CFR part 93 (subpart W) which outlines requirements and procedures for what is now a Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA) that includes the Hudson River and East River Exclusion Zones. There is also an excellent online training course on www.FAASafety.gov that is highly recommended for anyone who wishes to fly this route. The course provides a review of important airspace changes and operating procedures, like mandatory reporting points, airspeed requirements, and changes to the operating altitudes and traffic flow.

If you're planning on flying this route, be sure to take the online course, download the kneeboard reference guide, and review Part 93 as part of your preflight planning. With the high density of traffic, the vast differences in performance between aircraft, and the lack of good emergency landing spots, there's a lot to consider in this area. However, having a more comprehensive understanding about the New York SFRA will help you operate safely as well as help increase the likelihood of it being a fun and enjoyable flight!

A Life-changing Surprise - *James Williams*

Several good choices come to mind when I think back on some of my most fun flying memories. Despite the relatively meager number of flying hours I have when compared to some of my colleagues, I've managed to pack a lot of experience into those hours. They include many long cross countries and two almost literal cross countries, one north/south and one east/west. But when I consider my most exciting flying memories, I reflect back to where it all started. There are never any experiences as pure or as powerful as those initial experiences, especially unblemished by training or career expectations. And for me that experience came about 20 years ago.

It was early June, with spring slowly fading into summer. I had just finished elementary school when my father had promised me a "big" surprise. At that point my interests were pointed in other directions. I just finished reading *Jurassic Park* and was eagerly anticipating the upcoming movie. If you had to guess at my future occupation at that point, the heavy favorite would have been biology, and more specifically, paleontology. I probably would have told you the same.

My first flight was in a* Cardinal *similar to the one pictured here, although it was an RG model.

James Williams Photo

I was blissfully unaware of what was going on when my father drove me to the local GA airport one day. It certainly didn't seem like anything worthy of the "big" surprise he had planned, since I had joined my father on airport trips in the past after he earned his private pilot certificate. In fact, I recall my earlier rides in a GA airplane to be somewhat unimpressive. It was loud and the vibrations seemed to rattle the entire craft to within an inch of its breaking point.

While I wouldn't realize just how much that singular experience changed my world until much later, I now see it as a truly defining moment for me.

But that day was different. Rapidly I was introduced to a man I had never met and ushered out to a waiting Cessna *Cardinal*. What I was being told didn't make sense. How was I supposed to fly this thing? I couldn't even drive a car. But after strapping in, and with great assistance from the instructor, we slowly taxied out to the runway. And then, as we arrived at the runway, the noise got louder and we streaked down the pavement until the aircraft hopped off the ground. As we climbed into the sky the instructor explained all the controls and instruments to me and we proceeded to do what I now know was basic air work. After some time we returned to the airport. The experience remains a blur in my memory, but it was transformative.

While I wouldn't realize just how much that singular experience changed my world until much later, I now see it as a truly defining moment for me. It was the metaphorical small turn that changed the course of history for me. The pure and ephemeral experience would eventually shape my entire life.

Congratulations to Our

SANDY HILL

2012 General Aviation Awards Winners

In each of the past 49 years, the General Aviation Awards program and the FAA have recognized a small group of aviation professionals in the fields of flight instruction, aviation maintenance, avionics, and safety for their contributions to aviation, education, and flight safety.

This awards program is a cooperative effort between the FAA and more than a dozen industry sponsors (www.GeneralAviationAwards.org). The selection process begins with local FAA Safety Team (FAASTeam) managers at Flight Standards District Offices (FSDOs) and then moves on to the eight regional FAA offices. Previous national awards winners from each of those four fields then select national winners from the pool of regional winners.

Recipients of this year's national awards are: Marvin Hornbostel of Junction City, Kansas, Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) of the Year; Eric Christopher "Rick" Ochs of Gahanna, Ohio, Avionics Technician of the Year; MCFI Hobart Caleb "Hobie" Tomlinson of Huntington, Vermont, Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) of the Year; and Jeanné Carole Willerth of Lee's Summit, Missouri, FAASTeam Representative of the Year.

The FAA administrator will present the national awards in July during a "Theater in the Woods" program at EAA AirVenture 2012 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Included in the prize package for all four national winners is an all-expense paid trip to Oshkosh for the recipient and a guest to attend the awards presentation and other activities.

"These awards highlight the important role played by these individuals in promoting aviation education and flight safety," said JoAnn Hill, General Aviation Awards chair. "The awards program sponsors are pleased that these outstanding aviation professionals will receive the recognition they so richly deserve before their peers in Oshkosh."

Recipients of this year's national awards are:

2012 National AMT of the Year

Marvin Hornbostel of Junction City, Kansas, is a recipient of the FAA's Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award who has been working more than 50 years as an Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) technician. He has held inspection authorization (IA) for 40 of those years.

His passion for airplanes started early. Growing up during World War II, his dream was to fly B-17s. Of course, the war didn't wait for him but when his dad gave him his first rubber band-powered balsa model airplane, his future was decided.

He began his career in aviation with the United States Army at Fort Rucker, Alabama, where he received basic aviation maintenance training followed by two years of service in Germany. After discharge, he worked with a maintenance contractor at Fort Riley, Kansas, performing maintenance on Army aircraft. Thirty-two years later, he retired as the shop supervisor.

During his years at Fort Riley, Marvin spent his spare time working on GA aircraft while learning all he could about fabric covering. His first complete restoration, in 1968, was a 1941 Taylorcraft. Two of his restored aircraft have been award winners at airshows in Oshkosh and Blakesburg, Iowa.

After retiring in 1990, he continued restoring fabric aircraft at his home in rural Junction City. Within a short time, his ability to work with fabric covering became widely known and turned into a business. Marvin, along with his son Jon, own and operate Raven Aero Service, which was formed in 1992. Raven specializes in antique and classic aircraft restoration. The business quickly outgrew the facility and was relocated to Junction City's Freeman Field (K3JC). Raven currently has four full time employees.

Marvin provides summer jobs for students from Kansas State University's Aviation School who are interested in aircraft restoration. He also works with the Junction City High School Guided Study

Program to provide hands-on training to students interested in aviation maintenance. Additionally, he provides work experience and mentorship to Army aviation maintenance technicians to help them transition into civilian careers.

Marvin serves on the Junction City Airport Aviation Advisory Board and is president of EAA Chapter 1364, the "Wing Nuts." With a grant from The Greater Manhattan Community Foundation, he was instrumental in starting a Youth Aviation Education Program in the local chapter. The group participates in EAA's Young Eagles Program, has built a flight simulator, and is presently constructing a Bowers Fly-Baby.

Marvin has been married to his high school sweetheart, Janice, for 55 years. Together they have four children and five grandchildren.

Marvin represented the Wichita FSDO area as well as the FAA's Central Region. This year's other regional AMT winners include: Patrick Michael "Pat" Carey of Redondo Beach, CA (FAA's Western Pacific Region); Jack Lynn Haun of Port Orange, FL (Southern Region); Robert Lee Hensley of Oklahoma City, OK (Southwest Region); Jacob Rama "Jake" Milstein of Boulder, CO (Northwest Mountain Region); Steven Nelson "Steve" Skinner from Northfield, VT (Eastern Region); and Janese Valerie Thatcher-Buzzell of Inver Grove Heights, MN (Great Lakes Region).

2012 National Avionics Technician of the Year

Eric Christopher "Rick" Ochs of Gahanna, Ohio, has been named the 2012 National Avionics Technician of the Year. He owns and manages Spirit Avionics Limited, an FAA certified Part 145 repair station at Port Columbus Airport (KCMH) in Columbus, Ohio.

Rick grew up in Columbus as an avid hot-rodder and attended a vocational education program entitled "Communications Electronics" in high school. It was there that he developed an interest in electronics and nurtured his mechanical aptitude.

He obtained his formal avionics training in the United States Navy and began his career on the flight deck of the carrier USS Forrestal (CV-59) as an avionics troubleshooter. After his discharge from service, he received additional avionics education in the industry via a succession of positions at large and small companies.

In March 2000, he founded his own company, Spirit Avionics, which began as a one-man operation. Spirit Avionics now employs 10 people and services military, federal, corporate, and private aircraft.

With over 25 years of avionics experience, Rick is a well-known leader within the avionics community. He has been dedicated to establishing avionics technician national certification and academic accreditation standards to enhance professional development. He also is heavily involved in industry and FAA initiatives to properly recognize avionics technicians for their critical role in aircraft maintenance and modifications.

Rick currently works on initiatives to elevate the professional credentials of aircraft technicians through his involvement with the National Center for Aerospace and Transportation Technologies (NCATT). NCATT is a non-profit organization dedicated to establishing globally recognized training accreditation and certification standards to qualify aerospace professionals in their respective career fields. They've developed industry certification standards for aircraft electronics technicians, and Rick is working in their workshops to help establish standards and credentialing requirements for professional avionics technicians.

In addition to serving on the Aircraft Electronics Association (AEA) board of directors, Rick is chairman of the AEA's Member Benefits Committee and is the FAA Ambassador for the Columbus FSDO. He serves on the National Business Aviation Association's (NBAA) Maintenance Manager's committee and co-chairs the Advanced Training and Education sub-committee. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Youth Aviation Adventure program.

A soon-to-be-instrument-rated private pilot, Rick also holds Radio 1, 2, and 3 Repairman certificates and an Airframe mechanic certificate as well as an FCC General Radio Operator license. He regularly flies the company's Cessna 182 with the latest avionics technologies installed by the Spirit Avionics team.

A member of the EAA who regularly participates in FAASTeam outreach initiatives, Rick is married and has four children.

Rick represents the Columbus FSDO area and the FAA's Great Lakes Region. This year's other regional Avionics Technician of the Year winners include: John Tildon Austin Jr. of Honolulu, HI (Western Pacific Region); William David "Bill" Betts from Smithfield, NC (Eastern Region); and James Andrew "Jim" Lightfoot Sr. of Milliken, CO (Northwest Mountain Region).

2012 National CFI of the Year

Master CFI Hobart Caleb "Hobie" Tomlinson of Huntington, Vermont, has been named the 2012 National Certificated Flight Instructor of the Year. He is employed by Heritage Aviation at Burlington International Airport (KBTV) and is an independent flight instructor as well as a designated pilot examiner (DPE). Not only is he a current five-time Master CFI, but in 2010 he earned the FAA's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.

Hobie inherited his love of aviation from his father, who was a WWII U.S. Army instructor pilot in Burlington.After his dad taught him to fly, Hobie went on to earn commercial, instrument, multiengine, and airline transport pilot certifications as well as flight instructor ratings and several type ratings. He has amassed more than 35,000 total flight hours.

In 1964, Hobie graduated from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston with a major in Aircraft Maintenance Technology and an Aircraft and Powerplant (A&P) certificate. After graduating from Vermont Military Academy, he served a six-year tour in the Vermont National Guard. Meanwhile, he worked as a flight instructor, aircraft mechanic, and charter pilot for Northern Airways.

Hobie earned his initial flight instructor certification in 1965 and has been an active CFI ever since. He always finds a way to be a teacher in virtually every job setting. Today, his primary areas of specialty are in instrument and multiengine training at the CFI and ATP levels as well as tailwheel aircraft and seaplanes. He is also a Cirrus certified instructor, has served as an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner since 1977, and has accumulated over 11,000 instructional hours since becoming a CFI.

A FAASTeam lead representative for his local FSDO, he presents safety seminars and writes a monthly safety newsletter for over 300 subscribers. He was also responsible for presenting and advising on the eight-part CFI workshops and routinely participates in the Northeast Safety Expo. Additionally, he has earned and maintains the FAA Master-level WINGS.

Starting in 1967, Hobie spent 33 years as a flight engineer, pilot, and simulator instructor with Trans World Airlines (TWA). Since 2005, he has been Heritage Aviation's director of safety and a Citation CE560XL check airman. He is also responsible for creating and teaching safety management systems (SMS) curricula to all employees.

Married with two grown daughters, Hobie is an EAA Flight Advisor as well as a member of AOPA, SAFE, NAFI, WBA, VAA, IAC, and SPA.

Hobie represented the Portland Maine FSDO area as well as the FAA's Eastern Region. This year's other regional CFI of the Year winners include: Lambert Charles "Bert" Mackentepe of Cullman, AL (Southern Region); MCFI Lynnwood Karl "Woody" Minar of Dresser, WI (Great Lakes Region); Dave William Pressy of Saint Louis, MO (Central Region); Robert Lindsay "Bob" Stedman of Parker, CO (Northwest Mountain Region); Christopher Charles "Chris" Webb from Garland, TX (Southwest Region); and Donna Marie Webster of Bakersfield, CA (Western Pacific Region).

Thanks to the General Aviation Awards Program Sponsors!

Support and sponsorship for the General Aviation Awards program is provided by Women in Aviation International **(WAI)**, The Society of Aviation and Flight Educators **(SAFE)**, the Professional Aviation Maintenance Association **(PAMA)**, the Ninety-Nines International **(The 99s)**, the National Business Aviation Association **(NBAA)**, the National Association of State Aviation Officials **(NASAO)**, the National Air Transportation Association **(NATA)**,

2012 National FAASTeam Representative of the Year

Jeanné Carole Willerth of Lee's Summit, Missouri, is the 2012 National FAASTeam Representative of the Year. Her personal mantra is "aspire to inspire before you expire!" She believes true leadership requires giving back. Whether it is lobbying for GA, recruiting new members for the 99s, or fulfilling a Vietnam veteran's last wish for a flight over Kansas City, Jeanné is a leader.

Growing up in Omaha, Nebraska, Jeanné was exposed early on to GA. Both of her parents were avid aviators. Her mother, a "Powder Puff Derby" cross-country air racer, taught Jeanné to fly at the Cessna Pilot Center (CPC) in Omaha where she instructed. Catching the air race bug, Jeanné went along as her mom's copilot in two All Women's International Air Races.

In 1991, after 14 years of concentrating on family and a computer-marketing career, Jeanné started flying again. In 1998, she entered the 2,400-mile Air Race Classic with her mother and her then 17-year-old daughter, a student pilot. She received a scholarship from the 99s in 1999 and earned her instrument rating, followed by single engine and multiengine commercial ratings.

After managing computer training centers and teaching computer science at a college, she shifted gears. Her next career change involved flying and adding a CFI, CFII, AGI, IGI, and MEI along with presenting at aviation safety seminars nationwide. She also became a volunteer FAA Aviation Safety Counselor.

Jeanné instructs at Air Associates, a CPC at Johnson County Executive Airport (KOJC) in Kansas City and at Lee's Summit Airport (KLXT) where she chairs the airport board. She has over 2,000 hours and teaches primary, instrument, multiengine, and Garmin G1000 transition training. She's also a mentor for "late in life" learners and specializes in getting dormant pilots successfully back in the air.

A believer in lifelong learning, she's a supporter of the Wings Pilot Proficiency Program. In recent years, she helped the FAA coordinate and present the eight quarterly training modules for CFIs. In addition to presenting safety seminars, she helps organize the FAA's annual Safety Standdown.

In the 1990s, Jeanné started flying children to Shrine hospitals with her father. She has now become a passionate advocate for public benefit flying and volunteers for Angel Flight Central, Pilots 'n Paws, Challenge Air, and Young Eagles. She is a past chair of the Greater Kansas City 99s and serves on the local Missouri Pilot's Association board. She is also a member of AOPA, EAA, The 99s, NAFI, and the American Bonanza Society (ABS).

Jeanné is married to Lee's Summit attorney Joe Willerth and they have three grown children.

Jeanné represented the Kansas City FSDO area and the FAA's Central Region. This year's other regional winners include: Mark Alan "Mordechai" Levin of Richmond, IL (Great Lakes Region); Richard Lawrence "Rich" Martindell of San Diego, CA (FAA's Western Pacific Region); Betty Grace Meyer of Clanton, AL (Southern Region); MCFI Megan Roberta Sayre from Bennett, CO (Northwest Mountain Region); Arthur Robert "Art" Tarola of Kutztown, PA (Eastern Region); and Henry Lee Weatherford of Mustang, OK (Southwest Region).

the General Aviation Manufacturers Association **(GAMA)**, the Federal Aviation Administration **(FAA)**, the Experimental Aircraft Association **(EAA)**, the Aircraft Maintenance Technology Society **(AMT Society)**, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association **(AOPA)**, and the Aeronautical Repair Station Association **(ARSA)**.

Additional support is provided by Advocates for Aviation Safety Foundation **(AASF)**, Aeronautical Proficiency Training LLC **(AVTrain)**, Master Instructors LLC **(MI LLC)**, National Aviation Safety Foundation **(NASF)**, and Rich Stowell Consulting **(RichStowell.com)**.

Sandy Hill is the Communications Director for the General Aviation Awards Program.

SUSAN PARSON

Checklist

Good Conduct

Be safe! Be good! Be careful! Have fun!

We cheerfully chirp such well-meaning phrases to one another multiple times a day, reducing them to clichés and robbing them of any practical meaning. It's nice to "be" or to "have," but the key is to *do* by taking whatever actions are required to achieve the desired state. However, as with many human endeavors, the challenge lies in knowing what should be done.

Fortunately, the aviation community benefits from an enormous range of how-to resources. Among them is the Aviators' Model Code of Conduct (AMCC), which is, in fact, an entire family of documents intended to help pilots and aviation maintenance technicians (AMTs) master the ever-expanding body of knowledge and technique required to be safe, good, and careful while also having fun in aviation activities. The AMCC:

- Promotes flight and ground safety, professionalism, and pilot contributions to the aviation community and society at large
- Encourages the development and adoption of good judgment, ethical behavior, and personal responsibility
- Supports improved communications between pilots, regulators, and others in the aviation industry

As described by its creators the AMCC is based on ethics, because:

> *Ethics complements all the regulations, instructional material, and experience we gain in aviation. It helps us to think more effectively about how to fly. (...) Ethical behavior, constructive attitudes, and a positive culture add to safety for individual pilots and foster a healthy aviation community.*

Ends and Means

To that end, each document in the AMCC family defines goals to help pilots improve performance and achieve potential by providing practical guidance for implementing the range of operational, practical, ethical, policy, and legal considerations. It seeks to offer: techniques and procedures that will help GA pilots become better aviators; actions to enhance flight safety; pilots' ethical responsibilities; training, airmanship, and pilot conduct; effective pilot decision-making; pilots' roles within the larger GA community and society at large; the need for self-regulation by the GA community; and ways to promote GA and make flying a more rewarding experience.

The basic Aviators' Model Code of Conduct presents its vision of aviation excellence in seven specific areas: (1) General Responsibilities of Aviators; (2) Passengers and People on the Surface; (3) Training and Proficiency; (4) Security; (5) Environmental Issues; (6) Use of Technology; and (7) Advancement and Promotion of Aviation.

For each of the seven areas the AMCC offers recommended practices resulting from:

- Analysis of widespread GA practices and applicable laws and regulations
- Evaluations of diverse aviation codes of conduct and ethics
- Considerations of ethical issues affecting GA and other flight activities
- Examinations of airport rules and regulations
- Reviews of foreign and international laws and practices
- Considerations of various risk-mitigation principles
- Extensive deliberations by aviation experts, aviation groups, and the aviation community

The AMCC invites use of the code as a foundation for individual airmen, associations, schools, clubs, and other aviation entities to create documents tailored to specific needs.

Check it out, so you can learn more about how to *do* what it takes to *be* safe in the sky.

Susan Parson (susan.parson@faa.gov, or @avi8rix for Twitter fans) is editor of FAA Safety Briefing. *She is an active general aviation pilot and flight instructor.*

TOM HOFFMANN

Nuts, Bolts, and Electrons

Practical Test Standards Revised for Aircraft Mechanics

The requirements and testing standards to become a certificated aircraft mechanic have come a long way since the Department of Commerce's Aeronautics Branch issued its first aircraft mechanics license to Frank Gardner on July 1, 1927. Over the years, updates have been made to the certification process to keep pace with changes in complexity and design, especially with the advent of turbine engine technology.

In addition to curriculum and test question changes, another document that continues to evolve is the Practical Test Standards, or PTS. This guide provides a blueprint of the standards and expectations for both the examiner and applicant to follow during an FAA oral and practical exam. Separate PTS guides are produced for each of the three practical tests required for an A&P certificate: Airframe, Powerplant, and General.

The most recent updates to the Mechanic PTS were published in June 2003, with a few corrections added later on in 2004. Then, in December 2010, a consortium of FAA, academia, and industry personnel set out to find ways in which the testing standards could be improved and made more user-friendly for both examiners and applicants. Everyone from FAA safety inspectors and Designated Maintenance Examiners (DMEs), to officials from universities and professional maintenance organizations contributed efforts to improve the quality of PTS.

As a result, a revised PTS is currently under final review and is expected to be published later this summer. Among the planned changes is the removal of the core competency requirements for each subject area. With the current (2003) PTS, applicants have three objectives for each subject of the practical exam, the second of which is always the required core competency element. The new PTS streamlines the objectives down to just two; one determines an applicant's knowledge and understanding of a given subject, while the other validates their hands-on skill level.

Another change was the clarification of the performance standards used by the FAA and the examiners. "While this change may not seem obvious to a test-taker, it is nonetheless critical to improving the integrity and consistency of the overall testing process," says Barry Watson, an Airworthiness Inspector with the FAA's Regulatory Support Division in Oklahoma City, Okla. "Having more clearly defined performance standards helps the FAA and the DMEs feel more confident that nothing is missed because of confusion or any misunderstandings of the requirements."

One other change you'll notice is the addition of a new subject area critical to aviation safety: maintenance human factors. Applicants can expect to be tested on the ability to recognize and mitigate certain human factors challenges, such as fatigue or complacency. To learn more about maintenance human factors, see chapter 14 of the revised AMT Handbook at www.faa.gov/library/manuals/aircraft/media/AMT_Handbook_Addendum_Human_Factors.pdf.

Other ongoing efforts in concert with the PTS changes are updates to FAA Order 8900.2, which provides guidance for FAA inspectors and DMEs when conducting a mechanic practical test, and Advisory Circular (AC) 65-2D, *Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics Certification Guide*. The AC contains details about certificate requirements, application procedures, and what subject areas an applicant can expect to see during the oral and practical exam. Revisions to the AC mainly reflect updates to regulation references and forms, and the advent of computer-based testing procedures for the written exam.

"These changes, together with the PTS updates, should provide both applicants and examiners with a clearer picture of practical test expectations and requirements," says Watson. "All members who have participated in these revisions are confident that we now have a much improved process that will better serve the AMT testing effort."

If you have any questions or comments regarding the new PTS, please email them to: AFS630Comments@faa.gov.

Tom Hoffmann is associate editor of FAA Safety Briefing. *He is a commercial pilot and holds an A&P certificate.*

If You Cross the Line

Important!
ATC now issues a separate "cross" or "hold short" instruction for each and every runway encountered on a taxi route.
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Federal Aviation Administration

SCOTT TYRRELL

Vertically Speaking

Have Fun, Be Safe

I bet you can remember your first solo flight like it was yesterday. Likewise, I bet you were anxious and had a great respect for the adventure that you were about to set out on.

Although aviation has become incredibly safe over the years because of technology and training, the potential of a flying accident or incident always exists. Consider that personal/private and instructional/training flights lead U.S. helicopter accidents at 36 percent, according to the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST) Compendium Report, a detailed accident analysis of 523 helicopter accidents from 2000, 2001, and 2006.

By flying smart, you can help the IHST achieve its goal of reducing the civil helicopter accident rate by 80 percent by 2016. Flying safe will also help you avoid a visit by your friendly FAA or NTSB investigator-in-charge.

Safety starts before you get in the helicopter. A good tool for accomplishing this step is the IMSAFE checklist:

- **I**llness - Are you, the pilot-in-command, suffering from any illness or any symptom of illness that might affect you in flight?
- **M**edication - Are you currently taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs?
- **S**tress - Are there any psychological or emotional factors that might affect your judgment or performance?
- **A**lcohol – What was your alcohol intake within the last 8 to 24 hours?
- **F**atigue - Have you had sufficient sleep and rest in the recent past?
- **E**ating - Are you adequately nourished?

After taking a personal assessment, consider IHST's Self Risk Assessment Toolkit. This toolkit allows small and medium-sized fleet operators and private pilots to assess their operations relative to key IHST recommendations for the U.S. fleet. Using these recommendations does not guarantee an incident-free flight, but implementing them will significantly reduce risks, strengthen your personal safety culture, and could even save your life.

Planning a Safe Flight

Here are some recommendations for planning a safe flight:

- Perform a safe and thorough aircraft preflight. The IHST identified that Performance of Aircraft Preflight procedures was inadequate in 8 percent of the accidents reviewed.
- Maintain a Minimum Safe Altitude (MSA). The IHST identified altitude height as a factor in 11 percent of accidents. A recommended practice is to fly about 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL), or the highest obstacle. Autorotations from 1,000 feet AGL rather than a lower AGL provide many more options for a safe landing. Remember, performing a GOOD autorotation to a BAD spot is better than to perform a BAD autorotation to a GOOD spot!
- Be aware of obstacles. Aeronautical charts depict only those obstacles 200 feet AGL and higher.
- Get the weather forecast. A quick and complete check of the weather is always a great chance to avoid unexpected surprises.
- Let someone know about your flight plans. If you don't file an FAA Flight Plan, consider telling someone your intended route and your estimated time of arrival.
- Run "what if" emergency scenarios as you enjoy your flight.

James Williams Photo

For example, a "what if" scenario might include

making an emergency landing because your engine just died in flight. You have three landing options: A) Water; B) Roads; or C) Trees. Pick one and then commit to it. Remember that increasing your MSA will: increase your glide; eliminate the need to land in water, on a road, or in the trees; and provide the excellent alternative of a golf course.

When it comes to aviation, I would rather learn from other pilots' mistakes than learn from my own, so check out the National Transportation Safety Board's website for accidents related to your aircraft, industry, or region. The tragedy of an aircraft accident is only compounded if we fail to learn something from it.

So have fun, and fly safe.

Scott Tyrrell, a former U.S. Air National Guard officer, is a Continued Operations Specialist and Accident Investigator in the FAA Rotorcraft Directorate. His previous experience includes over 20-plus years in aircraft maintenance including extensive knowledge of C-130 aircraft maintenance as a Commander of an Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and Mission Support Group.

Government Industry Projects

By Scott Speed

Here are some of the Government Industry Projects (GIPs) currently underway, which will help update and advance equipage and operation of WAAS technology.

Associated Aircraft Group (AAG)

This project applies the lessons learned from previous vertical flight projects to New York City low altitude and terminal area operations. This will allow for safer and more enhanced vertical flight operations without impacting current commercial fixed wing traffic into the business jet hub at Teterboro and the three major airports: Newark, LaGuardia, and Kennedy. The primary routes for helicopters in New York transport passengers to and from the local business jet and airline airports and also between the Manhattan heliports and the eastern end of Long Island. This helicopter initiative is in cooperation with AAG, an operator of charter and fractional share helicopters, based in Wappingers Falls, NY.

This project is focused on application of WAAS technology for unique helicopter approaches in the highly complex Air Traffic Control (ATC) environment of New York City. The goal is to deconflict helicopter and fixed wing aircraft to allow unimpeded, simultaneous, all-weather operations. The intention is that these demonstrations, once established, will be converted into public use procedures in the future.

Bell Helicopter

This project, in coordination with Bell Helicopter and the University of Oklahoma, focused on the collection of flight technical data which forms the basis for the creation of Public-Use criteria for helicopter WAAS LPV approaches. Up to now only "Special" procedures have been available for helicopters. These are typically created for individual operators and are not available for use by the public. To facilitate this project Bell Helicopter obtained a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) for WAAS avionics installed in their newly developed B-429 helicopter. The University of Oklahoma developed portable data collection equipment that was carried onboard the aircraft during tests. The FAA developed demonstration WAAS-based infrastructure in airspace utilized by Air Methods Corporation, which operates the Bell 429 in the Des Moines, Iowa metropolitan area. WAAS LPV approaches to area medical centers were developed using Point In Space designs. This project has been successfully completed. The public-use criteria document has been delivered to the appropriate FAA offices and is currently in the review and release process.

CareFlite

CareFlite, which flies the AgustaWestland A-109E helicopter, is a major operator for medical transport. Aeromedical helicopters transporting patients from outlying areas near the Dallas / Fort Worth Airport (DFW) are faced with transiting the busy and complex airspace surrounding DFW. During inclement weather air traffic controllers routed helicopters operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) away from DFW, causing increased flight time to the medical center helipads and potential flight hazards for arriving and departing airline traffic. Under this project, a WAAS-based demonstration infrastructure was developed first placing new helicopter LPV Point in Space approaches to five trauma centers and then creating a connecting, non-interfering route system encircling DFW. This system allows helicopters to file IFR flight plans to the route system from exterior pick up points then to proceed to the trauma centers' helipads, thus eliminating potential conflicts with airline traffic and allowing air traffic controllers the ability to provide immediate clearances, thereby minimizing flight time from any location to the site of medical units. This demonstration project has had all infrastructure developed, tested, and approved. Flights are underway daily gathering the data necessary to prove the system's functionality.

Scott Speed supports the Global Navigation Satellite Systems group in the FAA as the editor of SatNav News. Previously with Eastman Kodak, Lockheed Martin, and Motorola, Speed writes about technical subjects for general audiences.

TOM HOFFMANN

Angle of Attack

Transforming GA Safety – One Day at a Time

The FAA's Five-Year Plan for reducing the general aviation fatal accident rate is now two years old. Far past its formative stage, the plan has grown legs which are now firmly planted in the GA community. Behind the architecture of the plan stands Mel Cintron, FAA's General Aviation and Commercial Division manager. His goal is anything but simple: to transform GA safety and reduce fatal accidents to an unprecedented low level. However, significant progress has been made as the plan nears its halfway point.

"The plan was not easy to get started," says Cintron. "Initially, many were skeptical of the agency's plan and it took some time before the GA community gained trust with it." However, after forging ahead, Cintron is seeing definite signs of progress. Several aviation associations, type club coalitions, and academia officials are engaged with the plan and are providing healthy dialogue about greatly-needed accident mitigation strategies.

"The efforts of the GA community are, and will continue to be, instrumental to the success of this plan and the reduction of the GA accident rate," says Cintron. The plan also benefits from the efforts of several different offices within the FAA such as Aircraft Certification, Airports, Accident Investigation and Prevention, and the Small Aircraft and Rotorcraft Directorates.

In 2010, there were 268 fatal GA accidents, resulting in 454 deaths. The latest NTSB statistics indicate a slight reduction in fatalities for 2011, to 444; a small but sure sign of improvement.

"The GA accident rate has remained pretty static over the past several years, but I know we can do better," says Cintron. "The solution is a joint solution. Everybody has to be involved for us to move the needle with GA safety." Cintron adds that the plan's success is also reliant on having a non-regulatory strategic approach.

The initial part of the five-year plan involved an in-depth analysis of the leading causes and contributing factors to GA accidents. The General Aviation Joint Steering Committee (GAJSC) identified these risks by adapting the highly-successful Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST) model used to improve air carrier accident rates. Subcommittees within the GAJSC are now hard at work developing targeted, but non-regulatory risk mitigation strategies.

Some of these strategies have already been integrated with currently available resources like the revised Advisory Circular (AC) for Flight Instructor Refresher Courses (FIRC) and the new AC for Airmen Transition to Experimental or Unfamiliar Airplanes. Also underway is an AC for remedial training, and there are ongoing discussions with the GA community on developing an FAA amateur-built aircraft handbook in 2013.

Another important milestone in the GA Five-Year Plan includes a commitment among aviation academia organizations to revamp their core training curricula to emphasize professionalism as well as address specific GA accident causal factors.

Safety communication is also a crucial facet of the plan. The FAA Safety Team (FAASTeam) has championed efforts to introduce a creative component to airman training and education, especially with its annual Safety Standdown events and videos that have focused on several of the top GA accident causal factors. The Pilot Proficiency Program, or WINGS program, is another core educational component of the FAASTeam, offering ongoing remedial training for GA pilots. Recently a WINGS Industry Advisory Committee was formed to look at ways the program can be improved. (Check www.FAASafety.gov/ for the latest updates.)

"The response to the GA safety plan is commendable," says Cintron. "But we can't rest on our laurels. In order to have a true impact on safety, we have to continue to work side-by-side with the GA community, sharing our results and adjusting our strategy as needed.

The FAA's plan is also more than just a five-year strategy," Cintron adds. "It's a life-long commitment to improve GA safety."

Tom Hoffmann is associate editor of FAA Safety Briefing. He is a commercial pilot and holds an A&P certificate.

Calling All Mechanics

Keep Informed with FAA's Aviation Maintenance Alerts

Aviation Maintenance Alerts (Advisory Circular 43-16A) provide a communication channel to share information on aviation service experiences. Prepared monthly, they are based on information FAA receives from people who operate and maintain civil aeronautical products.

The alerts, which provide notice of conditions reported via a Malfunction or Defect Report or a Service Difficulty Report, help improve aeronautical product durability, reliability, and maintain safety.

Recent alerts cover:

- cracked main landing gear attach casting on a Cessna 182G *Skylane*
- rudder torque tube corrosion on a Cessna 208B
- cracked aileron pulley brackets on a Piper PA-28-R200 *Arrow*

Check out Aviation Maintenance Alerts at:
http://www.faa.gov/aircraft/safety/alerts/aviation_maintenance/

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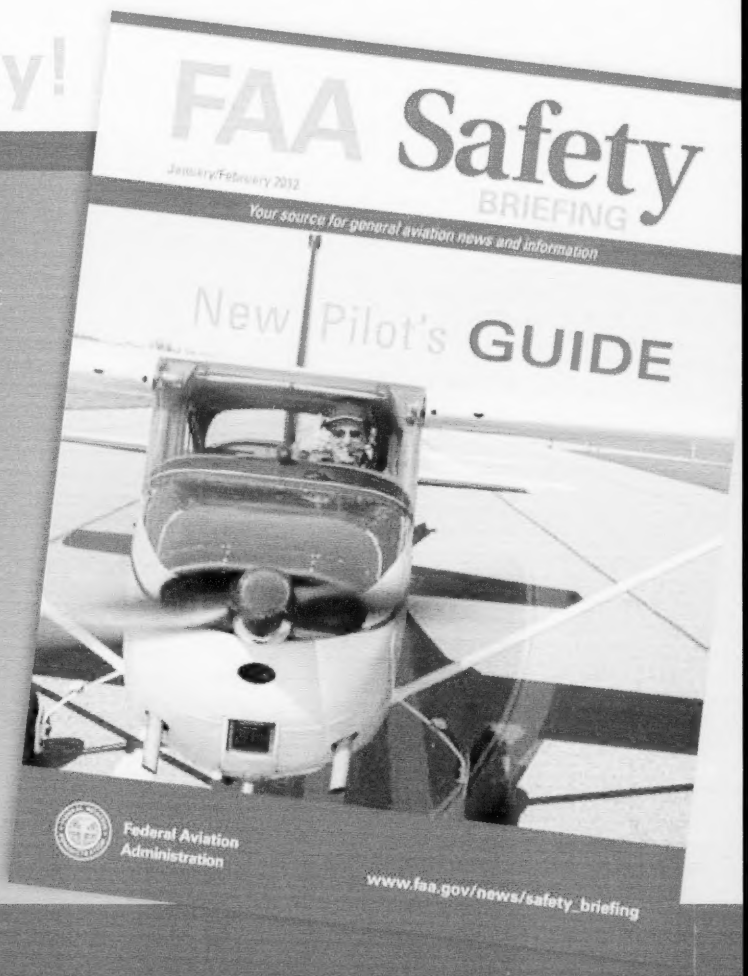

Flight Forum

Airport Visitation – Operation Fly

I came across this website today and I thought I would pass it along in case you aren't aware of it: http://www.operationfly.com/.

It struck me as being along the same lines as the state airport ambassador programs, except the goal of this program is to encourage pilots to get out there and fly to (and claim) each of the airports in the US. You claim an airport by submitting a photo of the airport in which you can also see the challenge word "Operation: Fly."

I wonder if state-specific programs could be built off this same infrastructure without the need for specific stamps/passports and administration time etc., that add to the cost of many of the current state programs. Pilots register on the Operation: Fly site, they claim airports in their state, the claims are validated by the Operation: Fly folks and then specific state programs could base their awards on claims validated on the site. The states would have to trust the validation process and claim review would have to be timely, etc., but if you could get appropriate sponsors, you could build a variety of different award systems off this platform.

Simon Twigger

Thanks for the tip; we'll gladly pass it on. The objective is to document landing at each public use airport in the United States, while having fun and promoting GA. The Operation:Fly website notes that it is a challenge, not a contest – there are no awards for claiming the most airports; the objective (as stated) is to fly and visit U.S. public use airports. To "claim" an airport, you must be sole manipulator of the controls of the aircraft when it lands. The airport claim is made via the website. It must include a photograph that identifies the airport in some way and has the challenge key word ("Operation:Fly") visible. For those who want to check it out and register to participate, the website is http://www.operationfly.com/.

Flight Instruction

Thanks for the great article on learner engagement ["Flying is Not a Spectator Sport" – Jan/Feb 2012]; I agree that this is THE essential element in all learning but especially in flight training. This is not only critical to the learning phase; it is the only way to persist in aviation if you want to be safe. Piloting is not a spectator sport...you are either PIC or you are "along for the ride." My students are often surprised at how "unhelpful" I can be as a flight instructor. "Deferring to the right seat" is a common and highly inappropriate learning model in aviation; we as CFIs should endeavor to become superfluous. Once the basics are mastered and the demonstration has occurred it is time for the student to "grab it and growl."

When I function in the cockpit as a pilot examiner, it is painfully obvious that many hopeful applicants have been helped way too much by their co-dependent CFI and the unfortunate student has never really flown as PIC (pilot in charge?). I think the metaphor of good parenting is appropriate in this pursuit. Our role as CFIs from day one is progressively getting out of the aircraft and turning over the responsibilities to our new pilot. And yes, there is a little "tough love" in there too!

David St. George, DPE, MCFI

Thanks a lot for the feedback. We all work hard on the magazine, and it's very encouraging to hear when we've hit the mark. As you observed, the goal, as in parenting, is to transfer the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for a pilot (child) to transition from being totally dependent to totally independent. And there is indeed too great a tendency toward right seat deference - so much that you almost stop noticing sometimes (not good).

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Let us hear from you—comments, suggestions, and questions: e-mail SafetyBriefing@faa.gov or Use a smartphone QR reader to go "VFR-direct" to our mailbox.

SUSAN PARSON

Postflight

Practicing What I Preach

"Uh-oh."

These are not words you want to hear at any stage of a flight. In this case, I had scarcely unlocked the left-side door when I heard them uttered by a friend and co-owner of the Cessna 182 *Skylane* that we had flown to Florida for Sun 'n Fun 2012. Dropping the bags I was about to load, I zipped around to see what prompted that ominous-sounding "uh-oh."

I wasn't even able to say that much. The right side of the airplane was streaked with a combination of dried, drying, and dripping 100LL. The fuel drain itself was dry, but avgas was seeping and weeping from every metal seam around it. The pungent odor of essential (and expensive...) blue fuel permeated the humid Florida morning.

For a few long seconds, all we could do was stare in shocked and silent disbelief. When my brain started to clear, it crossed my mind to marvel at how the universe had just served up an opportunity to practice everything I had preached the day before in my "Science of Situational Awareness" safety seminar. Here's how we needed to be AWARE that day:

Airplane

The airplane had been fine when we landed at Tampa Executive (KVDF) just a few days earlier. In addition, it had a newly-overhauled engine and a freshly-signed maintenance entry for annual inspection. What on earth could have happened between Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning? Though it took a few days to get an answer, we knew the airplane was bleeding, and our priority shifted to making maintenance arrangements.

Weather

Weather would have been a challenge even without the maintenance problem. With wicked thunderstorms forecast to arrive by late morning, we had planned an early-morning departure from KVDF and carefully briefed on a variety of options for en route diversion. We watched that forecast change quite a bit faster during the hours we spent organizing repairs and alternative transportation. I realized (again) that weather prophecy remains an inexact science.

Alternatives

Although I generally use this "A" in my safety seminars as a hook for discussing awareness of airspace, on that particular morning it plainly represented the need for awareness of good alternatives. A healthy stock of frequent flier miles and hotel points enabled execution of our inevitable "abandon-the-airplane-for-now" decision. It also helped that we had based the bird at a well-equipped GA airport just 15 miles from KTPA.

Reality

It is both amusing and amazing to watch thoughts in the "this-cannot-be-happening" genre tumble through like a series of waves on the beach. Still, the reality of a fuel leak (deemed "impressive" by an FBO staffer) was perfectly obvious, and we both knew in seconds that we weren't going anywhere via *Skylane*. Recognizing and quickly accepting that fact cleared the way for us to direct our energy to more constructive pursuits, like arranging repairs and figuring out how to get home.

External Pressures

Few, if any, flights are arranged and operated without some kind of external pressure lurking, threatening to lure you toward a poor decision. In this case, both of us had important Monday-morning commitments back home. The stress was reduced by having Sunday available as a buffer. It was a good planning decision.

Now for the rest of the story: On Monday we learned that the *Skylane's* 12-year-old fuel bladder tank had ruptured at the fuel sump, possibly because missing stabilizer clips had allowed it to move too much and, over time, weaken. Thanks to a genial mechanic named Howard and his very reliable aviation repair shop, the C-182 was ready for return to home base by Friday.

And, for the record: Notwithstanding the inconvenience, it was still a lot more fun to fly via *Skylane*.

Susan Parson (susan.parson@faa.gov, or @avi8rix for Twitter fans) is editor of FAA Safety Briefing. *She is an active general aviation pilot and flight instructor.*

TOM HOFFMANN

FAA Faces

Ken Spivey

Regional FAASTeam Manager – Southern Region

It was Dale Carnegie who once said, "People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing." It's a saying that many people involved in aviation can easily identify with, including Regional FAA Safety Team Manager Ken Spivey. There's a definite connection between fun and flying and that's something Spivey has leveraged into a successful aviation career spanning more than 50 years.

For Spivey, aviation got into his blood at very young age. His father was an engineer and aircraft mechanic in Alabama who started his own aircraft model manufacturing company. The Spivey Model Engineering Company produced control-line airplanes, mainly for mock combat and racing in the 1950s. At the tender age of two, Spivey recalls winning a combat contest against a seven-year old with one of his dad's models. "From that point on, the fun of building, designing, and working on airplanes surpassed being a hobby," says Spivey. "It became a passion."

Spivey's family transitioned from models to owning the real thing when they sold the business in 1968 and bought a 1940 Piper *Cub*. It was later replaced by a 1946 Luscombe 8A in which Spivey soloed at age 16. He continued to advance his aviation career by earning his private pilot certificate at age 17, followed by several additional airman ratings and certificates. After college, Spivey became a chief flight instructor at a part 141 flight school, and later enjoyed a stint as a corporate pilot, racking up 10,000 hours in the Piper *Cheyenne* and Beechcraft *King Air*.

Spivey's passion for aircraft also led him to a career in maintenance after he earned his Airframe and Powerplant certificate under the tutelage of his father and several aircraft mechanic friends. He worked on and restored several different aircraft including Piper *Cubs*, Cessna 120/140s, Luscombes, and his very own 1952 Cessna 170B, which just won the "Best Classic Restoration" award at the 2012 Sun 'n Fun International Fly-In and Expo. Spivey's whole family got involved with the 170 project, helping with parts, paint schemes, fabric, etc. He also gives special credit to the two men who led the restoration, Harley Pickett and Billy Stratton. As the family airplane, Spivey flies the 170 about 50 hours a year and is planning a trip to Colorado with his wife Sylvia for the International Cessna 170 Fly-In this summer.

In 1997, Spivey's aviation career took a new turn when he was hired as an FAA Aviation Safety Inspector in the Atlanta Flight Standards District Office. A year later he got involved in the Safety Program and is now the Regional FAASTeam Manager for the FAA's Southern Region. In his current role, Spivey is in a unique position to draw from his wide variety of experience to oversee development of education programs that promote aviation safety. "Safety should be first and foremost in the minds of anyone who flies," says Spivey. "But that doesn't mean we diminish what led us to aviation in the first place, which is the excitement, adventure, and freedom that it offers."

Ken Spivey

While hosting safety seminars in his region, Spivey always makes it a point to relate to his audience with personal stories, anecdotes—and yes, even some of his flying faux pas—to keep his programs fun and interesting. His zeal for introducing and sharing the joy of aviation to others also extends beyond his day job. Spivey hosts numerous fly-ins at his grass strip, Lazy Eight, near his hometown of Birmingham, Ala. "The last get together at the grass strip was hosting my son's church group," said Spivey. "I was able to introduce 25 young men, women, and children to the fun in flying."

> **The fun of building, designing and working on airplanes surpassed being a hobby. It became a passion.**

Spivey also stays active with several type clubs and flying organizations, and is even a member of the pit crew for *Big Red*, a T-6 for Sanders Racing Team at the Reno Air Races.

It is obvious Spivey has a passion for aviation and his message to others is clear:

"Be true, be safe, and have fun! It does not get more real than that."

Tom Hoffmann is associate editor of FAA Safety Briefing. *He is a commercial pilot and holds an A&P certificate.*

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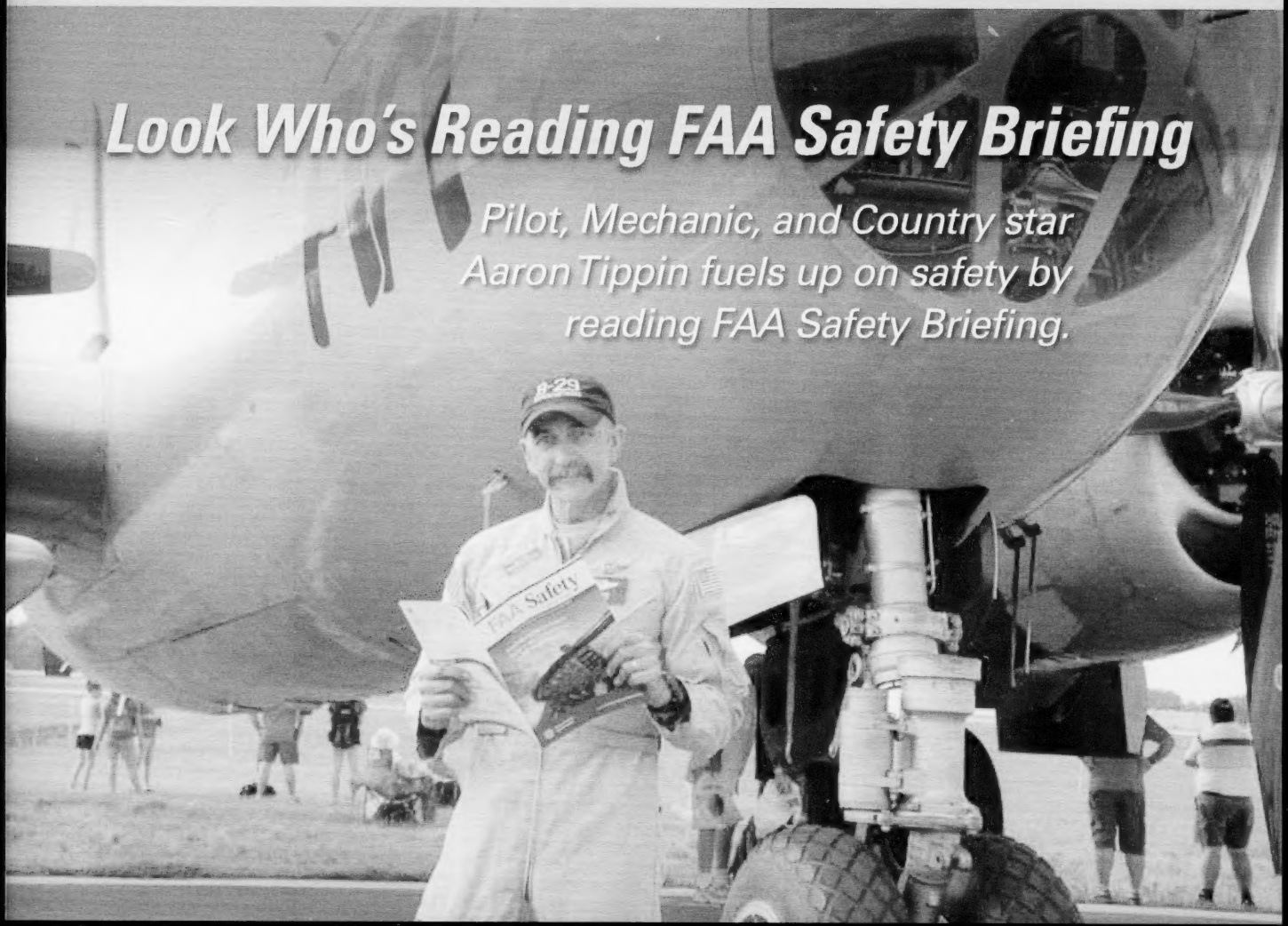
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